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Isaac J. Mistar

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
ISAAC JONES WISTAR

1827-1905

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

PRINTED BY
THE WISTAR INSTITUTE OF ANATOMY AND BIOLOGY
PHILADELPHIA
1914

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AUTHORIZATION

At a meeting of the Board of Managers of The Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology, held February 11, 1914, it was unanimously voted that the Autobiography of General Isaac J. Wistar be printed and that it be distributed to an extent to be determined later. The President was requested to appoint a committee of two, with authority to act, to determine the details of printing and the method of distribution.

Robert G. LeConte and George Vaux, Jr., were appointed as the members constituting this committee, President Edgar F. Smith being a member ex officio.

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PREFACE

These notes have been written almost entirely from recollection as other occupations permitted and the memory of events long forgotten or confused could be recalled and arranged.

Many circumstances not now recalled with sufficient clearness have been omitted, but those related are true, as far as they go, though no doubt inaccuracies respecting names, dates, and the sequence of small events, may in some cases have imposed themselves on the recollections of occurrences many of which are now so remote.

Philadelphia, 1892.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY. HISTORY OF THE WISTARS

When one not inordinately addicted to discoursing of himself begins to contemplate a lapse from such negative virtue, though he can easily find plenty of reasons to satisfy a conscience quite ready to yield, a second person is sure to discover among them some few grains of vanity more or less speciously concealed. Nevertheless, there are all sorts of vanity, useful, indifferent and offensive, and if in that broad variety we are to include such foibles as love of approbation, desire to please, or a wish to convey information amusing or useful, in our view, then it must be acknowledged that few intelligent acts of our lives are entirely free from the quality we are all so ready to disclaim.

It may therefore be admitted that it is one of the Protean forms of that all-pervading weakness that leads us to regard our own period as peculiarly eventful or important. It is not unnatural and I hope not unbecoming, that when one discovers little that is remarkable in his own career, as must always be the case with most of us, he should find a certain complacency in the reflection that he has at least lived among remarkable persons, or during a specially eventful period.

Possessing no doubt a full share of the common weakness, I nevertheless cannot help thinking that posterity with all its accumulated wisdom will find something peculiarly interesting in that portion of the nineteenth century which has seen such new forces as steam and electricity hunted down, captured and harnessed into the daily service of man, has reconstructed every branch of human knowledge, created a new chemistry, physiology, biology, geology and physics, has substituted rational and systematic inquiry for the old dogmas of supernaturalism and

authority, and has applied each conquest thus obtained over nature and ignorance to such practical purpose as to revolutionize the life of man and separate him farther than ever before from other animate beings and from all other known forms of existence. It is scarcely too much to insist that by the useful application of the new knowledge gained during this comparatively short period, nearly every human habit has been modified and to a great extent changed. We gain our livelihood differently, we work, trade and travel, eat, fight and amuse ourselves differently, are ill and use medical and surgical remedies differently, have immeasurably increased the activity, comfort and average length of our lives. It is only when arrived at the final article of death that we continue to traverse the identical road of our fathers and sink to rest very much as they did, in the same old way, unchanged since the beginning of life in the world.

The economic changes in production and distribution during the present generation have of themselves modified nearly all our daily habits, and would require a volume to enumerate and describe. During a period almost momentary, compared with the long centuries of human history, every adult man has had conferred upon him by the new mastery of the several natural forces before referred to, and previously unknown or mischievous, the equivalent of a certain number—perhaps a score—of willing and obedient slaves requiring no food, wages, amusement, or police restraint, always cheerful, willing, ready, who never quarrel over their share of the product, and never offend any moral sense or charitable scruple of their beneficiaries. The augmentation and cheapness of production thus gained, in rendering life easy to the workers, and luxurious to all as consumers, has pushed far back the barrier of the subsistence limit, for expounding which Malthus was so long derided, and aided by important medical and sanitary discoveries, has increased the population of the civilized races beyond any former experience or prediction. Under such influences, that steadily increasing accession has overflowed into all previously unknown or unused portions of the world, pushing back or exterminating inferior peoples, tending to substitute the more advanced races throughout all continents and islands and con-

verting all available territory everywhere into farms, mines and workshops sustaining and inviting still denser populations.

Even with the knowledge now possessed, it seems as though the process must go on till within a short time the races who know how to avail themselves of these new agents, and perhaps to discover more, will displace or destroy all others and themselves occupy every useful corner of the world. It is a significant fact, that all these advances react and interact upon each other without cessation and with rapidly accumulating force. Every acre reclaimed from the wilderness in Africa, India or Dakota, makes life easier and therefore more abundant in London, Berlin, New York; and every new facility, every new-found cheapening of production and distribution in these old centers of population, renders life easier, safer, happier and more abundant in the newest lands won for industry and civilization. Thus even if our civilization has already reached its maximum—which there seems little reason to believe—the new forces already set in motion must go on operating, until in a short time—perhaps within one lifetime—the world as the seat of industry and population must become as unrecognizable to us who are about to leave it, as our existing world would now be to the men of a former century.

When I was born and for some time afterwards, there was no coal, natural gas or petroleum used in America. There were no railroads, electric telegraphs or telephones, no steamships, no anaesthetics, no knowledge of microbic causes and phenomena of disease. Chemistry and metallurgy as now applied to industrial production were almost unknown, and many of the most necessary and cheapest substances now in daily use, like aluminium and Bessemer steel, were either not to be had or only in minute quantities as a curiosity for cabinets. The greatest cities of our country were unimportant provincial towns occupying small fractions of their present areas, and with no greater proportion of their existing populations. Florida and the vast territory then known as Louisiana, now occupied by numerous great commonwealths, had but recently been acquired. California, Oregon, Texas and Arizona had not been acquired at all and the Mississippi river was with trifling exceptions the western limit of American population.

Wood was everywhere the chief or only fuel. Grain was cut and harvested by hand, and badly ground by small water-powers adjacent to its place of growth. Manufacturing production was mostly by individuals at their residences and only on the minute and costly scale of which such a system was susceptible, and while the requital of labor was infinitely less than at present, the cost of everything in which it was a principal ingredient was so high as to keep out of use many articles now thought essential for ordinary comfort in the humblest households. Owing to the relatively great cost of the modes of transportation then in use, the areas of local distribution were small, and the advance of population clung closely to rivers and natural waterways. Domestic slavery was the social condition of a large part of the country and not only tinged all its domestic habits and foreign relations, but was considered such an indispensable economic and social advantage that even scholars and economists were scarcely permitted to criticize or discuss it.

Making full allowance for the natural tendency to magnify the importance of our own times, it can scarcely be doubted that the great changes which have thus occurred during a single life not yet spent, although so gradual and insensible as scarcely to command full appreciation without comparing one distant period with another, have been greater, and have established more radical modifications in domestic and individual life than those of any equal period in former times. But while the average length and comfort of individual life has been sensibly increased, it is yet doubtful whether a corresponding advance has been gained in political knowledge, and it now seems as though the life of nations—or rather of governments—is tending to even greater instability, notwithstanding the general opinion of the eighteenth century publicists that political stability was dependent on popular content, and popular content on popular comfort. Though the prevailing system of gratuitous education does not seem to have accomplished much of real value either in the repression of criminal depredation, or by increasing public contentment, yet popular intelligence due to the activities of surrounding life, has undoubtedly increased, and with augmented public comfort has tended at

the same time to render the half-educated masses more critical of political forms, and to supply readier means for demolishing and changing them. Whether for instance, the modifications effected in our federal constitution—mostly for ephemeral partisan objects—either by deliberate amendment, or by legislative or judicial usurpation, will tend ultimately to augment public contentment or rational liberty, seems at present improbable to me, but must be for another generation to determine.

Be that as it may, it is for the reasons thus imperfectly sketched, that notwithstanding the well-known tendency to magnify the events of our own times, I must venture the opinion that whatever triumphs of knowledge await our race in the future, and to whatever further modifications in life and habits these may lead, yet posterity, however it may despise our attainments, cannot fail to distinguish the nineteenth century as the beginning at least of the new knowledge and the modern life, and will study its thought, methods and development with the same philosophic interest that we bestow on the times and the discoveries of Galileo, Copernicus, Harvey, Newton, Watts, Stephenson and Morse.

It is therefore rather for these considerations than for mere vanity, that having passed the age of greatest activity and being in a measure restricted by wounds and infirmities from some of the pursuits still agreeable to many at my period of life, I have thought myself privileged to look forward to a less active life than heretofore and to occupy some leisure hours from time to time in setting forth for younger members of my family something of the march of knowledge and empire in America as it has seemed to one individual during what this generation regards as a stirring period both in war and peace. For simplicity's sake I propose to do this in a plain autobiographical manner, notwithstanding the necessary frequency of the personal pronoun, perhaps catching a glance at some contemporaneous persons and events as they attracted my attention by the way, but for the most part withholding names except in the case of public characters or where I feel entire confidence in the accuracy of my memory. As I never kept diary or notes, with the very few exceptions which will appear, I may sometimes be uncertain or erroneous in dates or

even in the sequence of small events, for I have little to reinforce my recollections except the notes above mentioned, some old letters and accounts, and a very incomplete series of official military orders, papers and telegrams of the civil war period.

As respects the vast territory traversed forty years ago in the far Northwest, I may claim some excuse for possible omissions or errors of a minor character in geographical or other details. My business there was trading, hunting and trapping, my only companions were wholly unlettered, and for a period of some years I never saw a book, map, or indeed even a roof except some few and widely scattered posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. For months together I heard no language but voyageur French or Indian, and little contemplated any future attempt to give a narrative of the adventures that seemed simple enough at the time. But notwithstanding distance of time, absence of notes, and nearly half a century of subsequent occupations of totally different character and associations, I have sufficient confidence in my memory to believe that by omitting all events not remembered with clearness, I may attain substantial accuracy, with some of the minor exceptions mentioned.

As I have no expectation or intention that these notes shall go beyond the members (in esse or in futuro) of my own family, I will begin by setting forth some items of family history of interest to no one else, in the hope that they may be worth an effort to rescue from the oblivion which surely overtakes at last all things resting principally on scattered papers or oral tradition. I will therefore make no further apology for inserting here some items of family history in more connected form than, so far as I know, they exist elsewhere. In order to facilitate their being easily skipped they shall all be put together in this place.

I was born on the 14th of November, 1827, at Number 184—now 726—Arch Street, Philadelphia, being the oldest of the ten children of Dr. Casper, and Lydia Jones Wistar, all of whom lived till maturity.

My mother was the oldest daughter of Isaac Cooper, and Hannah Firth Jones, and was descended on both sides from old colonial families of English and Welsh stock. Her lineal ancestors

include the Carpenters, Coopers, Prestons, Hills, Lloyds, Firths and others, distinguished in early colonial annals, some now extinct in name, but none in blood. It is useless for me to try to enumerate her countless virtues as daughter, wife and mother. Beautiful in person, cultivated in mind, gentle in heart, sober and sure in judgment, she was to me an incarnation of the qualities which the mothers of the all-absorbing Anglo-Teutonic race have almost unconsciously developed and transmitted to the best and noblest of its sons. She was companion and friend, joy, solace and delight to every member of her family, and when in 1878, after a long life devoted to their happiness, at the ripe age of seventy-four, she died surrounded by her children, calm, fearless and triumphant, something was taken from their lives which changed the tenor of their thoughts forever.

The nearest common ancestor of all the American Wistars and Wisters, was *Johannes Caspar Wister*, sometimes called in the church records Herr Johannes, and occasionally Hans, which is a common abbreviation of Johannes. He was born at Hilsbach, Baden, April 15, 1671, and died at the same place January 13, 1726-27, leaving surviving him four children aged in the following order, viz.: Caspar, Catharine, John and Ann Barbara. Caspar arrived in Philadelphia September 16, 1717, and John and Catharine not until September, 1727, having remained near their father till his death. Catharine married in America into the family of Heister, and settled on a large tract of land in the Tulpehocken Valley; becoming ancestress of a large and influential body of descendants of that name. Ann Barbara married in Germany a councillor named Bauer and had issue, of whom a daughter married in Germany a gentleman of Dutch descent named Keppele, with whom she came to Philadelphia, where she left numerous descendants of that name. All the American *Wistars* are descended from Caspar, while John is the ancestor of the Wisters.

The difference in the last vowel of the family name first originated on the arrival in America of these two brothers, and that somewhat confusing circumstance is intelligibly explained by the following facts. Caspar arrived in Philadelphia and was naturalized as *Wistar* before John's arrival, by a special Act of the

Provincial Assembly passed May 9th, 1724, and recorded A. Vol. II, page 279. There is also a statement in Colonial Records III, page 235, of the Governor's 'passing' the above Act, where the name is similarly spelled. John arrived in Philadelphia in September, 1727, subsequent to the passage of the above Act, and notwithstanding that statutory change of Caspar's name and his acceptance of it, continued to adhere to the ancient spelling of his name, which as will be seen, had in this respect remained unchanged for centuries. Governor Gordon seems to have adopted a third form of spelling, since in a message to the Assembly found in Colonial Records III, page 374, January 16, 1729-30, he spells John's name W-i-s-t-r-e, which as it was never used by either brother must be taken as a simple mistake. The probability is that Caspar having been naturalized by special enactment, having married, and accepted conveyance of property as *Wistar*, was averse to a rechange even after John had definitely adhered to the ancient form. The circumstance was an unfortunate one, since to that extent it seems to divide a family of single origin, which notwithstanding more than one migration, and throughout a great antiquity diversified by all the vicissitudes of mediaeval periods, had hitherto been one.

Caspar the eldest son of Johannes Caspar was born February 3, 1696, in the same house then, for ages previously, and down to this day, known as the 'Förster Haus,' at Wald Hilsbach, near Heidelberg, in the Electorate—now the Grand Duchy—of Baden. He was the eldest of the eight children, of whom but four survived their father, of Johannes Caspar, who was hereditary förster (forester) to the Elector, as had been his ancestors for several generations. Though the appellation 'Herr' or its abbreviation invariably precedes his name in the church records, the rank was probably little above the present condition, but its heredity in this family seems to indicate certain qualities of capacity and fidelity not necessarily associated with the modern functions of forester, the old office having long since been abolished throughout Germany, where all forest administration is now vested in a specially trained body of civil servants of the State. Wald Hilsbach or Forest Hilsbach, so called to distinguish it from the other

Hilsbach in the Rhine Valley, is a small village of fifty-one houses and seventy families, lying about eight miles from Heidelberg in an elevated position on the border of the Black Forest, and is at present attached to the Parish of Neckar-Gemünd. Its venerable Förster Haus seems in appearance one of the oldest structures in Germany, not excepting ancient churches and castles of far greater renown. Its striking antiquity and long preservation in the midst of the great Palatinate battleground of Europe, notwithstanding repeated destructions of the rest of the village, is explained by the neighboring peasants as due to its habitual use—as the best house in the vicinity—for the quarters of hostile commanding officers. The only replies that could be got to inquiries respecting its actual age, were that it had ‘always’ been there, and had ‘always’ been the förster haus.

According to tradition of his descendants, confirmed by facts to be presently related, the ancestors of Johannes Caspar Wister undoubtedly came to Baden at a remote period, from the then Austrian province of Silesia, but exactly when and how they first came to hold confidential or domestic relations with the Austrian descended, but Protestant Electors of Baden, thus far rests largely in tradition, and cannot be certainly established from any yet discovered record evidence, since the Lutheran parish church of Hilsbach with all its mediaeval records was burned during the Thirty Years’ War, 1618–48. But the long gap in family history occurring between its early residence in Austria and the later establishment of its Baden offshoot, derives a much surer light from oral and other tradition, now that this is confirmed by certain facts not yet exhaustively known, it is true, but quite consistent as far as they go. A tradition has always prevailed among the descendants of Johannes Caspar, that his ancestors had originally come from the then Austrian province of Silesia in the train of an Austrian prince, who by descent or otherwise had come to reign at Baden. There is no such historical record of any Habsburg prince except the two Rudolphs.

The royal house of Austria is one of the oldest existing, and its heads were Dukes of Alsace—then lying on both sides of the Rhine—at least as far back as their ancestor Ethico, who held

that dignity in the seventh century. Long before the family acquired imperial rank, even before Christianity attained complete dominion in Northern Europe, the Counts of Habsburg had become sovereign princes holding among their hereditary possessions the lands of Alsace and the Margravate of Baden. Rudolph I, Count of Habsburg, both before and after his election as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, A.D. 1273, did reside at times in the Electoral castle of Heidelberg, doubtless taking with him an Austrian court and household train, in accordance with his dignity and the customs of the period.¹ The western, or oldest part of that great Palatinate castle is still known as Rudolph's building, and could only have derived that ancient name from the above-mentioned Rudolph I, Count of Habsburg A.D. 1218-1291, or from his grandson Rudolph, Elector and Count Palatine, the son of his daughter Matilda by Louis II of Bavaria, surnamed the Severe. Both were in residence there at different times, and the latter died there in A.D. 1319, since which event, no Rudolph or any other Austrian prince has reigned in Baden (except by feudal construction, as the Emperor and suzerain of the Elector). In the protracted war waged for the succession of the first Habsburg emperor between his son and heir Albert I, and the emperor Adolphus, Rudolph the Count Palatine sided with Adolphus against his kinsman until the defeat and death of Adolphus at the decisive battle of Gelheim, A. D. 1298, after which he was reconciled with the other princes of his family and remained till his death at Heidelberg a staunch and stalwart ally of his Austrian kindred.

Whether or not the period of one of the Rudolphs is to be accepted as fixing the time of the removal of the Baden branch of Wisters from Silesia to Baden, it is at least certain, as we know from the Baden records, that such removal was long anterior to the Thirty Years' War, 1618-48. It is the opinion of the clergyman and other educated men of the vicinity that the family came from the

¹ It was Rudolph the first Habsburg Emperor and his reputed acquisitiveness that was referred to in the celebrated prayer of the Archbishop of Bad, "Sit close on thy throne, O Lord, or the Count of Habsburg will shove thee off." I. Henderson's Germany, 123.

eastward and was exotic in Baden, and during the time it existed there it certainly never planted itself deeply. The name never spread or abounded in Baden, and at no long period after the emigration of Johannes Caspar's children to America, 1717-26, the name disappeared from the Electorate, and during subsequent generations has only been known there by tradition. But it is still found about its original seat in Austria and Bohemia, and possibly in Silesia, although the existing Wisters of Prague and Vienna suppose that if any of their family survived in Silesia when that province was conquered and annexed by Prussia, they then retired, like most Silesian people of rank, to the other provinces remaining to Austria.

The Austrian family spells its name *Wister*, and traces its armorial bearings through three different periods, of which the progressive dates are relatively indicated by additional quarterings in the shield, and the completer development of the crest. The two earlier of these bearings carry the legend of *Wisster*, which in the latest has been modified to *Wister*. In heraldic language they are stated as follows in the order of their antiquity, viz.:

Wisster: Argent, a pelican in its piety proper. A crest coronet ducal.

Wisster: Per pale dexter or, sinister lozengy argent and sable, a bar or. On a Knight's helmet opened faced with necklace, three lozenges in pale the upper and lower or, centre purple, between two wings erect, dexter or, sinister sable.

Wister: Per pale dexter argent, on a bend azure two mullets of six points argent, sinister lozengy argent and sable, a bar or. Out of a crest coronet or, on a knight's helmet full faced with necklace, a demi eagle wings displayed sable, in its mouth a spray of six olives. [See plate, page 28.]

It is observable that throughout the secular augmentation of these arms such salient emblems as the coronet have been retained, though during the later periods, more subordinated in relation to other devices derived from later quarterings. The knight's helmet, together with the potential eagle of the second period, is retained in the latest, where however the potential has become a real eagle. The great antiquity of even the latest of these bearings is unquestionable, since after a prolonged search by cele-

brated experts, covering European collections of many thousand ancient and modern arms, these are only found in the most ancient Austrian heraldic collections. They clearly establish the existence at a remote period of an ancient nobility with its necessary feudal incidents of lands and a place of defensive strength, since those were then essential qualifications for noble and military service.

How these feudal qualifications were lost by this particular family must probably always remain obscure. Racial and feudal war always prevailed in the border provinces of Silesia, Moravia and Bohemia, where during the entire historic period, the Teutonic and Slavic races were intermixed and struggled for dominion, as they still do. During and after the time of Huss, 1373-1415, religious differences assisted to make the local condition one of downright anarchy, and it has been computed that between 1390 and the termination of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, the population of Bohemia alone was reduced from three millions to eight hundred thousand. Though the details are mostly lost, we know that the tenure of lands and dignities suffered an equal or more destructive revolution.

Hence one can be at little loss for an explanation of the vicissitudes of any particular family. But whenever or whatever the precise occasion, the Wisters in Austria have long since lost touch with the Austrian nobility, and the present generation in Austria, though well-educated and in comfortable circumstances, ranks with the middle or commercial class. Its present representatives, though retaining their heraldic achievements and traditions, no longer even know at what period their lands and rank were lost, or even the identity of their ancient seat. Moreover the Silesian nobility having been dropped from the Austrian herald's office since the alienation of that province from the empire, and not taken up by Prussia, by whom their lands were mostly confiscated and regranted, those facts cannot now probably be learned from any official record, unless these bearings can be reconnected with the recorded history of some other of the families with whom they have quartered at some former, but now very distant period.

Loss of rank in feudal times, necessarily followed loss of lands, and whenever in this case such loss occurred, it was certainly long anterior to the Austrian loss of Silesia. It is not unlikely that such family disasters may have influenced the Baden migration, although as is known from the Baden records, that migration itself occurred some generations before the Thirty Years' War. That the decline in rank was nevertheless somewhat gradual, is indicated by the fact that one of the family was some three centuries ago confidential manager of the North German estates of the Princes Lichtenstein, and went to reside on them, but on their divestiture returned to Bohemia. The confidential representative of the semi-royal House of Lichtenstein, holding a precarious tenure in a foreign land, may have been of low estate, but must have belonged to the class of gentry.

In view of all the circumstances, it can be said with confidence that the name is certainly Teutonic Silesian, and with the Scottish exception hereafter mentioned, which as will be seen is rather apparent than real, has no other European existence. There is, indeed, a family spelling its name *Wüster* at Augsburg in the German province of Bavaria, whose name though differently spelled, has an almost identical pronunciation. But if these be an offshoot either of the Austrian or Baden Wisters, there is no record of such connection, and therefore no relationship with them can be traced. But notwithstanding the absence of such evidence, the inference from all the facts now known is very strong, that the Austrian family was the original root of all the Wisters and Wüsters of Central Europe, and that *Wüster* was a corruption resulting from distance and isolation during an age when family names were few in number and counted for little, just as the later corruption of *Wistar* we know resulted from a clerical error in engrossing a Statute.

The apparent Scottish exception referred to is as follows: The late Brinton Coxe, Esq., when President of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, first observed and directed attention to the following passage found in the "Calendar of State papers, Domestic series, of the reign of Charles I," A.D. 1637, page 226, of which there is a full abstract in the series of English State paper

calendars in the Philadelphia Library. "1637, June 19, Sir Thomas Esmondes and others to the Council. Report upon two petitions one from John Wister and others his Majesty's servants, for moneys due to them for provisions served into the late King's house, in the 21st and 22d years of his reign," etc. The identity and origin of this John Wister can now probably never be ascertained, but it is believed that the name can be found in no prior English record and had no previous English existence: and since the name as we have seen is exclusively Austrian and is otherwise confined to a single Austrian family and its Baden branch, there is every reason to believe that this petitioner came from the Baden branch of the same family and was one of the many thousand Palatinates who took refuge in Protestant England after the unparalleled devastation of their country by Tilly in the Thirty Years' War. There are Wistars now and for some generations past, domiciled near Toronto in Canada, who derived their descent from Scottish origin, and who have in recent times sent offshoots to Philadelphia and other parts of the United States. These are probably descendants of the John Wister who was living in Great Britain during the first Stuart reign, and who being in attendance on the first Scottish King of England, may very likely have been himself living in Scotland; but however that may be they cannot for reasons given, possibly be of ultimate Scottish origin. The name is not only exclusively Austrian, but is moreover entirely arbitrary, and notwithstanding certain fanciful suggestions, has no known meaning in any language: and there is therefore the less reason to suppose that it could have had more than one independent origin in two or more different times or places.

Hence from all these facts and others highly corroborative but of minor importance when considered separately, we must conclude, even without the aid of the confirmatory oral tradition, that the ancestors of *Johannes Caspar Wister* originated in Austria at a very early period, where, as their escutcheon conclusively shows, they were of noble rank, and like other nobles were possessed of the lands and places of defence which in those days constituted the necessary and only basis of nobility and military

service. That at some remote date, and by some of the numerous catastrophes of that rude period, they lost their lands and slowly but steadily declined in rank. That after the commencement of such decline, and possibly in consequence of it, but long prior to the Thirty Years' War, a branch from which the American Wistars and Wisters are derived, accompanied a branch of the Habsburgs to Baden, where with the reigning family of Baden, to whose hereditary service they belonged, they became Protestants at a later period, the older branch continuing as it still does, to adhere to the ancient faith.

The German language is now almost universally used in Silesia except among the most secluded peasantry, and it is quite probable that further researches there by one conversant with that tongue, might either through local traditions, or scraps of local history still lingering in its ancient cities, or by contemporaneous records of still important local families of antiquity, bring to light additional information concerning an ancient race long since declined in its original seat; and might even identify among the numerous ruined strongholds of that picturesque and historical country, the very seat it occupied, many centuries ago

Caspar Wistar arrived in Philadelphia the 16th of September, A.D. 1717, and at once proceeded to apply his capital and earnings to the purchase of land in the city, in New Jersey, and in the parts of Pennsylvania now covered by the counties of Chester, Berks, Centre, Clinton, Northumberland and Bradford, in all of which he acquired large tracts which were transmitted to his descendants. In the year 1738, as fixed by articles of agreement now in my possession, he constructed near Salem, N. J., the first glass works in America, which were successfully operated by himself and his oldest son, Richard, principally by the labor of 'redemptioners,' of whom they imported a large number. I possess a goblet made there for his own use and carrying his monogram, which in style and ornamentation would be quite creditable to a later period.

Caspar had come to America very much against the wish of his father, who had offered without avail to resign office in his favor if he would remain, and I cannot discover that he afterwards

maintained much intercourse with his family in Germany. The numerous personal traditions which have come down respecting him indicate a vigorous and original character. One of them which has been published in various forms was committed to writing from the dictation of his grandson by the latter's daughter, Mary Wistar Brown, as follows:

He was appointed with a number of other persons among whom was a clergyman named Peters,² the Secretary of the Governor's Council, to make or attend an Indian treaty in the interior of Pennsylvania. It being the trout season they expected to be well provided with that favorite fare, but on arriving at their destined inn and summoned to table, were exceedingly disappointed in seeing but one small dish of inferior trout with a single good sized one placed on the top. The divine hurried to his seat and sticking his fork into the only desirable fish, transferred it to his own plate. This being secured, with closed eyes and uplifted hands, he said *now* let us pray—and rehearsed the usual form. While he was thus engrossed, his facetious friend (C. W.) being seated near him, quietly removed the coveted dish—and when the surprised dignitary opened his eyes to the fact, he was thus pleasantly accosted, "Parson Peters, men ought to *watch* as well as *pray*."

Caspar's dexterity in the use of the rifle—probably to some extent hereditary in a family of 'försters'—was brought with him from the old country and remained with him till the close of his life. Soon after his arrival, a party of gentlemen having arranged to shoot in person or by representative for a prize, one of them engaged Caspar Wistar to shoot for him, on which occasion his skill gained for his principal a gold snuff-box. Near the close of his life—in fact when his last sickness was already upon him—when riding on horseback "along the Point Road,"³ he shot a deer from the saddle, but being unable to dismount alone, he returned home and dispatched his man for the spoil. The rifle he brought from Germany in 1717 is double-barreled and *revolving*. It is now in the possession of Mrs. W. H. Miller of Media, Pa., one of his lineal descendants.

² Rev. Richard Peters, 1704-1776. Studied law at the Inner Temple, London. Ordained Clergyman 1730. Came to Philadelphia in 1735, where as Secretary of the Land Office during twenty-five years he acquired a large fortune. Was rector of Christ Church from 1764 to 1775.

³ Believed to be intermediate between where Port Richmond and Bridesburg now are and within the present built-up district of the city.

Though during after life he obtained great wealth, his early struggles with poverty in a strange country of different language from his own were not unlike those of other early immigrants under similar circumstances. When he declined his father's offer to resign office in his favor, his sire was greatly displeased and remarked that "a son who would not be satisfied with such a proposal, was not worth caring for," whereupon the youth paid his passage and embarked for the New World, then so little known, landing safely in Philadelphia with rifle in hand and ninepence in his pocket. Among his first employments was said to be wheeling ashes from a soap boiling establishment which gave rise to an amusing circumstance in his later years. Having assumed an active political part on the side of the Proprietary Government, in favor of which his great influence among the Germans was of considerable importance, certain political opponents conceived the brilliant idea of reminding him of the humble labors of his youth by hiring a common fellow to wheel a barrow of ashes back and forth before his door. But these worthy predecessors of some of our modern demagogues made a bad mistake in their man. As soon as the crowd attracted his attention he went out to the barrow wheeler saying, "Thee doesn't know anything about wheeling ashes; give me the barrow and let me show thee how it should be done," at the same time taking hold of the barrow and wheeling it back and forth for a time himself, thus signally triumphing over his assailants and spoiling their intended mirth by the practical demonstration that such *little things* are only great to *little minds*.

Caspar Wistar and Katharine Johnson, a member of the Society of Friends, having duly declared their intentions at the Monthly Meeting of Abington, according to the good order of that Society, were married in the Friends' Meeting at Germantown, on March 25th, 1726, Caspar having been admitted to membership in the Society of Friends for that purpose. The bride was of English Quaker parentage and the connection, while introducing him to membership and communion with that religious society, doubtless tended in other respects to promote his English associations—and it is worthy of remark as shedding some light on the

important subject of the assimilation of the early emigrants with the then predominating English stock, that every one of his male descendants having, like him, married with persons of that race, there is a very minute fraction of German blood now remaining in the present generation, and they have thus gradually come to possess, along with the old Teutonic name, a more unmixed English lineage than many families bearing names of English origin. On the death of Johannes Caspar at Hilsbach in 1726, his brother John and his older sister, Catharine, followed Caspar to Philadelphia. The former settled at Germantown, where he left many descendants, who followed him in the spelling of his name. Caspar died of dropsy in Philadelphia March 21, 1752, leaving surviving him two sons, Richard and Caspar, and four daughters, Margaret W. Haines, Rebecca W. Morris, Catharine W. Greenleaf, and Sarah, who died unmarried.

Richard was born July 6, 1727, married Sarah Wyatt at Salem, N. J., on November 27, 1751, and became a prominent citizen of Philadelphia, remarked in Watson's Annals as one of the few who then possessed a carriage. Like most persons of property and standing, he adhered stoutly to the king's side and as appears from numerous Whig squibs and doggerel of the time, became sufficiently obnoxious to the rebel canaille. On the 17th of June, 1778, Sir Henry Clinton in obedience to instructions, evacuated Philadelphia, and with an army numbering over 17,000 effectives, crossed the Delaware and abandoned Pennsylvania—the key of the struggle—to the rebels. The reasons have since been abundantly disputed and discussed, but whatever cogency they may have had at the time, the measure was fatal to the king's cause. Little was it realized by the scanty forces then contending along the extreme littoral borders of the great American wilderness, that such a casual act of war, by assuring speedy defeat to the royal cause, was to surrender half the world to popular institutions, so-called, and ultimately to ruin everywhere the hereditary principle.

Yet such far-reaching results are distinctly traceable to that great military and political error, as we must now regard it. The vast area, and unequalled virgin resources of North America

must have attracted population and accumulated wealth and power under any system, but as its development under peculiarly stimulating circumstances surpassed any similar national growth of ancient or modern times, and coincided so closely with the great popular victory, democratic institutions have usurped the credit, and received an irresistible impulse among the optimistic and superficial of all lands.

Little could Washington and the well-descended, land-owning, colonial gentry of whom he was the type, have foreseen that their success was to lead to the destruction of their class in the new continent, and to vest its government and law-making exclusively in the hands of the least interested and the least qualified. Yet it now seems as if that is about what 'self-government' has accomplished in the United States, since every observant person must admit that the educated and well-born, though hardly to be regarded as unfit or criminal on account of those advantages, are habitually distrusted by the democracy and, as a rule, excluded from popular favor and public affairs.

What remedies the future may bring forth to elevate the judgment and taste of the democracy, relieve it from stupid prejudices, and render its rule compatible with independent statesmen, honorable officials and intelligent government, cannot be foreseen, but it is certain that its tendencies at present are not such as to enlist the best ability and integrity of the country in public affairs, and there is reason to believe that many thoughtful persons regard administration by 'manhood suffrage' as a demonstrated failure, incompatible with order, offensive to sentiment, and even revolting to good sense. The majority in every populous community includes and always must include, the poor, the ignorant, the vulgar, the depraved; and common observation shows that their numbers increase more than proportionally with the growth of the social organism. That the ignorant should by noise and numbers govern the wise, the improvident make laws and taxes for the industrious and enterprising, the vulgar set standards of taste and the depraved, of virtue—such is surely a condition inconsistent with salutary progress under any but abnormal conditions and cannot endure after our country shall

have become fully populated and the competitive struggle of life severe.⁴

Be that as it may, the fatal act of Clinton—or his superiors—brought prompt disaster to many staunch Pennsylvania loyalists, and our own family did not escape. Before the king's troops were out of the city, mobs of bawling 'patriots' attacked the houses of prominent conservatives, and among others that of Richard Wistar on the south side of Chestnut above Third street. The front had been closed and barred by his children and servants, but Richard, who according to tradition was of no very submissive temperament, seized a cane and rushed out to remonstrate, probably not in the gentlest tones. He was set upon by the crowd, knocked down, trampled and beaten and would have been killed on the spot, but for a retiring rearguard of the royal troops who charged and dispersed the mob, rescued its victim half-killed as he was, and placed him in a baggage wagon in which he was carried with the retreating troops to Rahway, N. J., where he died of his injuries on the 4th of August.

Richard's farm or country-seat extended from what is now Tenth to Fifteenth street, and from Green street northward half a mile or more, embracing both sides of Broad street. The farmhouse surrounded by ancient and decrepit Lombardy poplars stood till within a score of years past, near where the corner of Fifteenth and Green or Mount Vernon streets now is. The mansion or dwelling was according to my recollection a few hundred feet east of Broad, a short distance north from Ridge avenue. It was burned by the rebels as royalist property early in the war, and the adjacent orchard, the finest in the colony, was maliciously cut down and the trees afterwards used as an abattis in the vain effort to keep the British out of the city. The house was never rebuilt. I perfectly remember my grandfather calling in my early childhood to drive me out to take a last look at the ruins, then

⁴ I think it was the wise Gouverneur Morris who said, there are but two governments—monarchy and aristocracy—democracy being no government at all, but simply a disorderly and stormy passage from one of the two forms to the other—and in due time, back again. History no less than inclination seems to give confirmation to his thought.

nearly level with the ground, prior to their removal to make way for streets and buildings. That could not have been far from 1833-35, and I distinctly recollect his effort to impress the occasion on my mind for remembrance, and his sympathy—plain even to the apprehension of a child, with the devotion and loyalism of his father then dead for more than half a century.

Even then much of the same respectable feeling compounded of political and filial sentiment still lingered among survivors of the great political and social struggle of the Revolution and the first generation of their descendants. Indeed, as we are reminded by similar events in the annals of our English race, so persistent and enduring are the memories of such great political crises when embedded in family traditions by the persecutions, confiscations and earnest feelings of our ancestors, that though usually modified from conviction to mere sentiment and sympathy, they require generations of changed conditions to obliterate.

My grandfather, Thomas, third son of Richard, was born on St. Patrick's day, March 17, 1765, and was therefore about seventeen at the time of the peace. From the time of his marriage, May 24, 1786, to Mary, daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Wain, of Wainford, N. J., his principal interest was in religious subjects, and he became, in sharp contrast with an unusually gay youth, a plain and devoted member of the Society of Friends, with whom as an elder he acquired great influence and respect. Like many of his sect and generation he became passively reconciled to the new government though with little enthusiasm for it, and still less admiration for the innumerable demagogues and professional patriots who rose with and fattened upon it. In fact, although his long life only ended in 1851, he never voted under the Republic, but on a single occasion, which was to oppose the new and more radical Pennsylvania State Constitution of 1838.

Absorbed as he was during the greater part of his long life in the religious pursuits, labors and charities of his own denomination, there were nevertheless many other subjects of public interest that received his earnest and life-long support, both personal and pecuniary. During the greater part of his life he acted

as an official in several capacities to the then important "Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons," in the "Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Negro Slavery," in the Philadelphia Dispensary, and numerous other charitable institutions. During the memorable ravages of the yellow fever in 1793, he served throughout that terrible pestilence as Treasurer of the "Committee of Safety, appointed," at the request of the overtaxed Overseers of the poor, "on the 14th September, 1793, by the citizens of Philadelphia, the Northern Liberties and the District of Southwark, to attend to and alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted," and himself guaranteed to the Bank of North America, by an instrument still in existence, its large advances made to the Committee, in the absence of the public authorities, who had almost to a man fled from the stricken city. From the minutes of that Committee, published in Philadelphia by R. Aitken & Son, 1794, an extremely rare volume now full of interest on account of the names and facts therein preserved, it appears that he attended all its numerous meetings except while himself prostrated by the disease contracted in the course of his voluntary duties and exposure. Several of the Committee died, and most suffered but survived.

Pursuant to the resolutions of a public meeting held March 22, 1794, presided over by Gov. Thomas McKean, an engrossed Memorial of the public gratitude was prepared and presented to each surviving member of that once celebrated Committee. The copy presented to my grandfather, though now safely in my possession, at one time passed through a rather remarkable adventure which was the first occasion of its existence becoming known to his children and descendants. It was some time during my childhood, probably about 1835, that his kinsman, Dr. Caspar Wistar Morris, in walking across the vacant common near the intersection of Broad street with the Ridge Road, on a professional visit to the old House of Refuge which then stood in that vicinity, happened to observe among a pile of old papers recently deposited there as rubbish a large parchment on which the name Wistar in prominent capitals chanced to catch his eye. On examination it proved to be the certificate in question, and it turned

out that a private closet of my grandfather's having become inconveniently full of old papers, the dustman had been called in and the entire contents carted out to the commons, where this interesting paper would soon have perished with the others but for the accidental glance of Dr. Morris.

Caspar, an elder and more distinguished brother of Thomas, born September 13, 1761, seems to have been endowed with a less devotional and more social temperament, and being less absorbed in religious exercises and pursuits, devoted himself to the cultivation of his profession, and to the kindred study of the natural sciences, especially that of comparative anatomy. After a classical training at the Penn Charter School in Philadelphia, so thorough that throughout his life he was able to use the Latin for conversational purposes, he graduated at the University of Pennsylvania as Bachelor of Medicine in 1782. Having during the same year become involved as principal in a celebrated duel, which the Quakers, whose peculiar views still retained great power in Philadelphia, regarded as little better than felony, he determined to prosecute his studies in London and Edinburgh for which object he sailed for Bristol in 1783 on the *Mildred* packet. After spending a year in England he went to Edinburgh, then a distinguished seat of medical science, where after a time he was elected President of the Royal Medical Society, and later President of the "Society for the Further Investigation of Natural History." Referring to these distinguished honors, Chief Justice Tilghman has said, "These honors conferred by a great, a learned and a proud nation on a youth, a stranger, one whose country had but just risen into existence, are the surest testimonies of uncommon merit." He received his medical degree at Edinburgh in 1786 and returning to Philadelphia, commenced practice there in the following year, rapidly taking high rank in the profession. He was elected Professor of Chemistry in the College of Philadelphia in 1789, became a physician of the Philadelphia Dispensary in 1787, and in 1793, of the Pennsylvania Hospital. In 1788 he married Isabella Marshall who died without children in 1790. He became a censor of the College of Physicians in 1793, holding that position till his death.

He married in 1798, Elizabeth Mifflin—niece of General Thomas Mifflin, first Governor of Pennsylvania under its Constitution and the newly adopted Constitution of the United States—by whom he had three children who survived him but themselves subsequently died without issue. In 1815 he succeeded his friend, Thomas Jefferson, as President of the American Philosophical Society, and he occupied the chair of Anatomy in the University of Pennsylvania from 1808 till his death, during which period he founded the great Museum now known as The Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology—attached to the University of Pennsylvania. He was the first anatomist to discover and figure the pyramidal protuberances still called after his name ‘Wistar’s pyramids’ of the ethmoid bone, and was the author of six papers contributed to the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, and of numerous other learned and scientific essays, besides “A System of Anatomy for the use of Students of Medicine” (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1817) which was long the principal text-book in use throughout the United States. At the time of his death, January 22, 1818, in the 57th year of his age, he had instituted a correspondence with Cuvier, Sommering, and other distinguished foreign naturalists, and was fast rising in European reputation as a comparative anatomist. Having long been in the habit of entertaining at weekly social meetings at his house his medical friends and other learned and scientific men, his friends after his death organized an Association called after his name, which except for a few years interruption during the Civil War, has ever since continued to exist, its entertainments having now been known for nearly a century as ‘Wistar parties.’

My father, Caspar, born June 5, 1801, was the second of three sons of Thomas who survived their father, and influenced, no doubt, by the successful career of his uncle, like him devoted himself to the medical profession. Like him he inherited a sufficient competence, but either that fact, which had not relaxed the ardor of the uncle, or the extreme religious tendencies inherited from his father, seemed to render the nephew fastidious in his practice and indifferent to the numerous professional resources by which success and profit are usually sought and attained. In

common with many of his professional contemporaries and friends, I think he possessed the qualities of quick and correct diagnosis, sound judgment, and knowledge of resources which if accompanied by the spur of necessity, must have carried him to the front rank of his profession. Notwithstanding the absence of that inestimable stimulus, which in my judgment no other circumstance or quality can fully replace, he nevertheless acquired a considerable practice, and inspired so much confidence and affection that he found much difficulty in terminating many of his professional relations, even after adopting the practice of living during a large part of each year in the country.

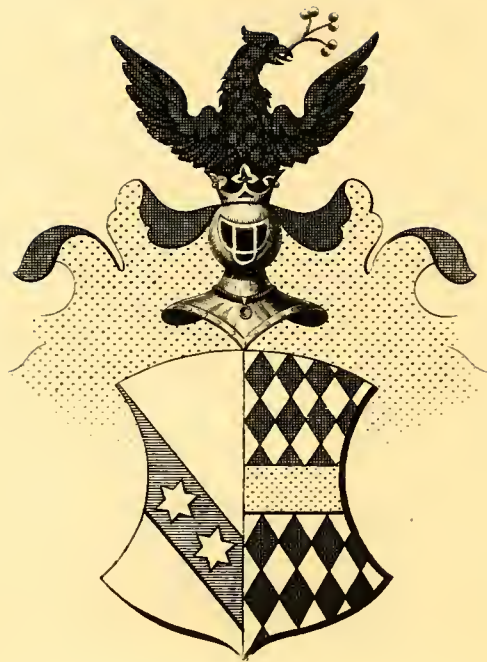
Though devoted to his large family, and deeply interested in their culture and education, his earnest religious sentiment and intense desire to instill it in his children, rendered him a closer domestic disciplinarian than would in these days be thought most judicious for the direction of young lads not to any great extent under the same controlling influence. As the oldest child, and possessed of a much more worldly mind, it fell to my lot to take the first brunt of his early domestic theories before greater experience brought modification. Always a sincere admirer of my father and deeply attached to him—for with his wide range of reading and love of knowledge he was in more demonstrative moments one of the most cultivated and delightful companions I ever knew—I have now to recall with regret that my numerous disobediences and rebellions were mostly traceable to an impatience of control which it was my duty to have restrained, and it was perhaps the best practical solution, that much of my youth came to be passed at boarding schools, by which domestic collisions were softened or avoided.

In the year 1839, when I had scarcely passed the age of ten, I was sent to the Friends' boarding school at Westtown, in Chester county, Pennsylvania, where with plenty of room, and knocked about among a large number of boys mostly older than myself, I soon learned with immense benefit that the world was pretty large and contained many other persons and wills besides one's own, that had to be regarded. The education was elementary and practical, the living plain, the morals good, and the

association in work and play with older and larger boys supplied a struggle and emulation both physical and intellectual, which is of priceless value at that early period of life. I spent a most useful eighteen months at Westtown, and after a year or two at the Friends' Select School—so called—in Philadelphia, where I derived lasting advantage from the excellent mathematical teaching of that good man and judicious teacher, Samuel Alsop, to whom so many of my generation owe, like myself, an unappraisable debt. I was sent in or about 1842 to Haverford School—now Haverford College—where I remained a year and a half, till the completion of the junior year. Daniel B. Smith, a learned and distinguished man, was then President, a position which he had accepted at some sacrifice to himself on account of his love of literature, and his great interest in the successful inauguration of that school, which had been instituted by the more liberal class of Friends, and was intended to supply a more advanced education to the youth of the Society, than some of the more zealous members then approved. He was a man not merely learned, but of original mind and cultured taste, and took keen pleasure in expanding and leading the opening minds of appreciative youth. To his broad views and fine taste in letters, and to the conversations which he seemed to take a pleasure in holding with me, I owe a benefit of which I have since been more sensible than at the time. Notwithstanding numerous revolts against the narrow priggism of some of the other authorities and an ardent inclination for mischief and adventure which frequently and justly provoked his rather passionate temperament, I have since perceived that my own tastes and ideals came during that period—by assimilation with his—to take a higher level, which, however depressed sometimes by adverse surroundings, they have afterwards been able to resume when more favorable circumstances presented.

It was under the dominion of Dr. Smith's intellectual influence that I learned to admire the best sentiments of the British poets, and the noble acts and actors of Roman and English history, an admiration which no lad can truly feel without some faint and humble desire to emulate. Those priceless and immortal standards of greatness and nobility, with his well selected English poetry

and fiction, though perhaps since widened and developed in my appreciation by more extended reading of books and men, have remained a more or less constant and beneficial influence throughout a life which has not always been without surroundings of a contrary tendency. It is difficult to exaggerate the beneficial effect of high ideals honestly admired and firmly lodged in the plastic mind of youth. They may be for long periods disregarded and apparently forgotten, but once implanted they can never perish, but are always tending to influence nobler and better thoughts and acts. Man is weak and unstable, but though he grovel on the ground, even from thence he must needs look upward to the planets he has once admired, and I believe none need fear that lofty ideals are wasted upon the young because these fail to come quite up to the mark. It may be, and sometimes certainly is, better to possess high standards and fall short of them, than to enjoy the negative virtues of a sinless prig with no higher ideals than the tattling platitudes of his kind. Virtue is good, but like other goods is better conquered than inherited, and when it proceeds without effort from mere vacuity of mind, it may possess less real moral and intellectual value than a smaller measure conquered by the struggling efforts of more generous but erring souls.



Wister



Isaac Iviston
Philad. 1845
Age 17.

CHAPTER II

HUNTING FOR WORK. START FOR CALIFORNIA

1844-1849

My education, such as it was, being now 'finished,' about the year 1844, much against my inclination I was placed in a Market street dry goods 'store,' under tutelage of a couple of thrifty New England Quakers whose conventional dress, sanctimonious deportment and godly nasal twang indicated an amount and pressure of piety which it was hoped might overflow plenteously on me and fill me to the extent of emulation with admiration of commercial holiness. But with an unaccountable perversity I hated the business and wickedly despised those devout men, notwithstanding their scrupulous—not to say ostentatious—mixture of weekday meetings and other devotions with more carnal efforts to work off their wares on the godless Egyptians of the country districts. Truth obliges me to confess that though I received no pay, even at that price I must have been superfluous to them, and after a year of disappointments which were probably mutual, I could endure it no longer and withdrew my inestimable services as sweeper, folder, and messenger, from the exemplary pietists whom my sinful mind was incapable of appreciating. But the larger world did not seem the least eager to secure the benefit of my talents, and in fact when it appeared that my father was indifferent and inclined to regard me as a failure, it seemed disposed to turn its back on me altogether. In vain I marched from store to store, describing with enthusiasm my talents and capacity; I seldom got any attention, and when I did, an interview with my depressed parent seemed to deprive such unwilling converts of all further desire for my services. Idleness, disapprobation, and

dependence were hard to bear and after a course of failures on shore, I thought business might be combined with adventure and turned my efforts toward the sea, as thousands of disappointed lads had done before me. Up and down the wharves I trudged, hunting down all the long voyaging skippers I could find and setting forth the priceless services I could render as a cabin boy.

But even that humble endeavor led to no success, and at last when so depressed that I was willing to shovel coal or sweep the streets or anything but remain idle, I agreed with a hearty young farmer of Montgomery county to work for him a year at anything I could do, or learn to do, in exchange for my lodging, board and washing. Thus having got down to pretty near the bottom, this humble enterprise, though not extremely remunerative, proved successful, for I learned really to support myself, in which I never afterward found any difficulty. Put on my mettle by previous failures, and the very low opinion which prevailed of me at home, I went at this job as though I expected to make a fortune the first year. I learned every kind of farm work, and worked like a horse from dawn till dark, doing a man's work and keeping up with the rest at mowing, cradling and all other work, soon finding myself surrounded with a hearty appreciation which by contrast was doubly inspiring.

When the season's work was over, near the end of the year 1846, I agreed with a friend of my own age, a lad in a neighboring country store who was then being pampered on the munificent salary of six dollars a month, to spend the winter on a pedestrian and exploring tour through the back counties, and as he possessed a capital of twenty-five dollars, while I only mustered five, he agreed to my peremptory but unbusiness-like requirement that his surplus wealth should be left behind, that we might start on an equal footing. It was about the end of November when I left the place which had furnished such useful and agreeable quarters, with the kind interest of all its inmates and with a certain amount of self appreciation, the fruit of conscious usefulness. L. and I with a shot gun and one small blanket each then started to walk from the old inclined plane, now converted into a rustic path in the park, up the state railroad which

then had its western terminus eighty miles distant at Columbia, where it had traffic connection with the state canals extending up the several branches of the Susquehanna. The traffic was then small and the trains few and slow, but by watching at adverse grades where the freight trains toiled slowly, we obtained numerous lifts till detected and put off by the train hands. At the present day when thousands of miles of railroads cover the country and their administration is conducted by scientifically trained specialists, our mode of travelling would be stigmatized as 'beating one's passage,' but that did not trouble our reflections when we could thus avoid a few miles' walking. In one way and another, riding and walking, we reached Columbia late one evening, and walked up the canal after dark to Marietta where we tried to sleep in a boardyard. The night though clear was very cold, and notwithstanding the ingenious device of depositing ourselves between two boards placed on edge, with another for covering, the boardyard as a sleeping accommodation proved a failure.

The cold was keen, the frost was heavy, our sleeping troughs were continually breaking down and tumbling in on us, and I have a recollection of sundry language used from time to time which I am confident would not have received the approbation of my father and his pious friends. As soon as it was light enough to see, we left the inhospitable quarters, made a toilet in the canal and started up the towpath, cold, hungry and cross. We soon found a boat tied up to the bank, and woke up the skipper who was rather drunk, and alone, all his hands having deserted him, probably for a better or less pugnacious brand of whiskey. The boat was empty on its last return to Bellefonte for the season, and the captain was alarmed at the ice on the canal which threatened to close up and keep him away from home all winter. We therefore found little difficulty in agreeing with him for board and passage to Bellefonte in return for our services. Everyone has heard of the Irishman who worked his passage on the canal by walking on the towpath and driving the mules. It cannot be denied that our contract had a strong family resemblance to his, except that in addition to the privilege of walking and

whacking the mules we were to be fed. But as soon as our jolly skipper found we could be trusted, one steering and the other driving, both being in quite as much of a hurry as he was, he lost no time in resuming his incipient and interrupted intoxication, and kept continually and conscientiously drunk during the entire voyage. In that happy state he required little solid food, and as (like the famous Mrs. Gilpin) he combined a certain thrift with his pleasures, he failed to see with the same perspicacity that we did the advantage of disbursing for our necessities. The consequence of this dullness of perception on his part was, that whenever we required money for a loaf of bread or any other small article we had to scuffle for it and even take it from his pocket by stratagem or force, and as our appetites grew with the difficulty of satisfying them, there was a continual alternation of starvation and war. Nevertheless, his tipsy suspicion and semi-hostile watchfulness did not seem to curtail his general friendliness and appreciation during the intervals when we wanted nothing from him, and he trusted us implicitly against all the outside world.

In the course of a few days, passed in a constant state of semi-starvation and fighting for food, we arrived opposite a fine large farm somewhere not far from the place called Selin's Grove, abounding with poultry and all sorts of agricultural abundance. I regret to have to say that before that charming vision of rustic wealth and food, all of our carefully instilled principles of morality and honesty broke down together in confused and tumbling ruin. After mature reflection on the best way of utilizing that tempting opportunity so as to fill our stomachs without helping to fill the jail, we tied up, fastened our tipsy governor in the cabin, and procuring plenty of corn from some belated field shocks near by, scattered it along the bank, across the gang plank and down in the empty hold, and after a little while shut down the hatches on the entire flock of poultry and started off with chickens enough for breakfast, dinner and supper, through a long and cheerful vista of future plenty.

Those State canals constructed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania between 1826 and 1848, were sold in 1857 to sundry

corporations organized for the purpose, and in 1867, long after this not very creditable adventure, I was elected President of the one in question which was known as the West Branch and Susquehanna, and after several years of negotiation ultimately got them all reconsolidated as the Pennsylvania Canal of which I have since been, and am now, the President. I have often since traversed it on foot and horseback, by boat and steamer, and have curiously looked for and endeavored to find the scene of that nefarious operation, not omitting many cautious inquiries from elderly foremen and officials, but have been unable to hear any tradition of it or to identify the place, and like many another offender have hitherto gone unwhipped of justice.

Many years after that event, when L. and I—having long since sowed the last of our wild oats and become substantial and sober citizens, when time had whitened our thinning locks, and sobered all our views of affairs and men—were sitting together on a Municipal Committee (famous in its day) in the vain effort to construct a decent administration of public business from such material as was afforded by greedy demagogues, venal officials, purchased voters, and in short all the dirty paraphernalia of ‘universal suffrage,’ I took the opportunity of relating this story, taking care to give L. sole credit for the scheme. He manfully acknowledged the main charge, or I might have had some difficulty in obtaining credence from that assemblage of sober, venerable and upright burghers.

At Milton the boat’s cabin had got to be such a disgusting place that L. and I, after taking care of the mules, started out to find more agreeable sleeping quarters and finding the upper window over a stable unfastened climbed in with the aid of a pole and spent the night in the hay, resuming charge of our craft early next morning. At last after a voyage which I think must have occupied nearly three weeks, by the end of which we had become accomplished canallers, we arrived at the boat’s destination on the Bald Eagle Branch near Bellefonte. Here we proceeded to sober up and groom down our worthy skipper, having first thrown the remainder of his whiskey overboard to prevent his falling into worse hands, and bidding him a friendly adieu which

was quite affectionate on his part, we struck out on foot across Centre and Clearfield into the mountains of Elk county, a large territory now divided into several populous counties, but then only sparsely settled by hunters and log cutters. Near where the village of Caledonia now is, we hired ourselves for fifty cents a day and 'board' to help cut out a road over the mountains which, according to my recollection, was designed to connect Erie with the town of Jersey Shore. The 'board' consisted of deer and pheasants shot by ourselves, corn meal occasionally brought in on a pack horse, 'tea' made from the young shoots of spruce boughs, and plenty of trout taken every morning and evening from our own traps set close by the house, not forgetting the privilege of sleeping in front of the fire in a log house of our own construction.

After a month or two of hard work which yielded us a very minute amount of wealth, we resigned this brilliant opening, and started out hunting with a wily old mountaineer who, with his solitary pack horse, made a living by hunting deer for their hides, and wolves and other vermin for the bounty then allowed on their scalps, to which the State with remarkably good judgment, required *both* ears to be attached. Snow lay on the ground, mostly to considerable depth, but with a good log fire, plenty of hemlock boughs to lie upon, and entire freedom of movement according to our own sweet wills, we were on the whole very comfortable, and maintained unbroken health without house or tent. One might reasonably hope for immunity from fire in the depth of woods and snow, and yet it was the cause of our principal adventure which it may as well be stated for the benefit of insurance companies, came about as follows: Our blankets being too short to cover both ends simultaneously, we had sewed them up into sleeping bags usually keeping the tow linings on the outside. One cold night with deep snow all 'round, I was waked from a sound sleep by a feeling of unusual warmth about the nether extremities, and discovered that the tow lining had taken fire from a spark and was blazing up into a conflagration. As each had his loaded gun inside his sleeping bag, the work of hurried extrication caused some confusion and considerable damage to clothes, tempers and blankets.

Another night we partially passed in trying to interview a panther who was so much interested in us and our affairs that he spent an hour or more in the investigation of the camp, walking all 'round it and from time to time either expressing his oral disapproval or calling his mate to come and help him examine us, we did not understand which. He kept at a respectful distance and we failed to get even a glimpse of him. I have seen and shot many of them since, but never knew one to linger around so long and exhibit so much curiosity. They are cowardly beasts, like all of our American cats, and unless they think themselves securely concealed, their main object is usually to get quietly away, the only exception being the female in her lair with young, in which position nearly all wild animals prefer a fight to a close inspection.

After a month or two, as it was evident we had not yet found the road to wealth, we dissolved partnership with our old hunter, who of course took care that the heavy deer skins should fall to our share of the effects. These we packed compactly and fastened upon a small raft, which we constructed by burning wind-fallen trees to proper lengths and fastening them together with poles and withes, having no means for making holes for pins and wedges in the usual manner. Securing our guns and all other effects, not forgetting some extra setting poles, upon this precious craft we started down a large creek supposed to be one of the numerous branches of the Sinnemahoning, on our way to Coudersport, a place represented by the retiring member of the firm as a large and thriving seat of the deerskin trade. The water was low and the creek was well supplied with timber, jams, rocks, falls, rapids and all the various sorts of obstacles fitted to elicit language of dubious propriety. The raft was constantly coming to grief, and once in going over a rocky fall, half the logs were torn out and L. jerked overboard in the boiling rapid below, being hauled back upon the remains of the raft with considerable delay and difficulty. After, according to our estimate, we had enjoyed about forty miles of this exciting navigation we abandoned the raft, and struck across the mountains by a well marked foot-trail to find our destination. As the hills were numerous and steep and we had considerably over a hundred pounds of skins, we divided

them in four packs and carried two forward a mile or two, returning for the others. In this manner we at last reached the gay metropolis we were searching for, which we found contained three or four houses, all told, one only of which was a general 'store.' We did not observe any signs of the wild competition among skin purchasers which we had been led to expect, and found an immense difference prevailing between cash and trade prices. As only cash was of any use to us we were glad to get twelve cents a pound for our skins, after lugging them on our backs at least seventy-five miles, as we guessed it, mostly over a rough and unsettled country.

Entirely convinced now that no large or immediate fortune was to be had by hunting, we started east on the main wagon road which led through Wellsboro to Towanda, working a little in saw-mills by the way. At the last-named place on the North Branch of the Susquehanna we found a large lumber raft with eight or ten hands, about to start down the river, upon which we agreed to work our passage to Wilkesbarre. At a point a few miles above that place the raft grounded near midnight on the opposite side of the river. As the skipper had already repudiated his undertaking to land us at Wilkesbarre on the alleged ground of this same danger, we were now for taking advantage of the opportunity to get ashore and take the chance of being able to get across to the town, but he begged so piteously that we would not leave him in this plight, with the danger of losing his raft, that we remained working, prying and tugging with the rest, sometimes in water up to our middles, till at last the raft was got afloat. When we passed Wilkesbarre, soon after, the skipper pretended to fulfil his promise by bawling for a boat, but as none came, we were in a fair way of being carried on and past the Nanticoke dam, but for the kindness of the pilot and crew who, in spite of the owner's bad faith, skillfully swung the after end inshore so that we could jump off into the slack water of the pool.

In that manner we got ashore about two in the morning, thoroughly wet, with several inches of snow on the ground and a freezing temperature. Making the best of our way back to Wilkesbarre, some three miles distant, we could not find any

person awake or a single house open. In trying to wake up the inmates of a tavern where a fire-light shone cheerfully through the window, we pushed the sash loose, which fell in with a tremendous clatter, and feeling that we were strangers in an extremely suspicious position, we foolishly ran away, never stopping till we reached a tavern at the extreme end of the town where we finally obtained admittance. As the snow kept on falling we lay in bed till dinner-time next day, after which we still more foolishly took advantage of an intermission of the storm to start out for the walk of twenty-five miles over the Broad or Wilkesbarre mountain to Whitehaven on the Lehigh.

The snow soon recommenced, and all traces of the single wagon road being obliterated, we went astray and when it became dark, found ourselves hopelessly lost in a storm of wind and snow on a wild mountain which then boasted but one house between Wilkesbarre and Whitehaven, a small cabin occupied by an old man engaged in making shingles. We climbed up and tumbled down ravines and precipices, and waded over and through the brush covered deep with snow, the storm seeming to increase in violence, and it was not till near midnight that in a lull of the tempest we dimly perceived the fire-light shining through the old woodcutter's single window, far off across a deep ravine. We got there at last and obtained shelter, but for which lucky chance, inexperienced as we were, we might very probably have ended our careers then and there. On the next day we got down to Whitehaven and following the good wagon-road down the Lehigh to Lehigh, below Mauch Chunk, there crossed the river and mountain to Easton, whence we walked down the Bethlehem turnpike to Philadelphia.

During the year 1847 my paternal grandfather having in consequence of increasing age, abandoned his habit of summer retirement to the country—always so prevalent in Philadelphia, my father received from him his country-seat known as Hilton, near Foxchase, ten miles from the city though within the municipal limits as now fixed, where he had spent his summers since the year 1790. My father then in his turn commenced residing there during the summer months, and being like all citizens, an agri-

cultural enthusiast, required my services not merely to aid in the invention of new theories, but in the practical work of restoring and remodelling the farm and buildings, which were extensive and had been somewhat neglected.

Having inherited a share of bucolic enthusiasm, I worked hard at this business during the season, and though not fully cured of my rural propensities at that time, may say that the experience then acquired, strongly reinforced by some more of later date, has amply satisfied me that agricultural diversions are much better adapted for the extravagance of the rich than for the advancement of the poor. This conclusion, it is true, did not dawn on me all at once, nor in fact till after later and exhaustive experiments in various places and under different conditions; but I am now none the less satisfied, as well from experience as observation, of the solid mass of truth underlying the conclusion of my Aunt Sarah W. Cope—an intellectual and observant woman—that I once thought so prejudiced and narrow, namely, that agriculture as a means of livelihood, so vaunted by sentimentalists and poets, is in all countries the *dernier* resource of the failures in more active and ambitious pursuits. The theme no doubt admits of discussion and invites a long explanatory essay which, however, I will not indulge in, being satisfied with my conclusion as the result of a long and gradual revolution of opinion. I can well understand how great minds can despise mere pecuniary results and derive keen pleasure from the constant presence of nature and her marvels, but I fail to see how such minds can contentedly waste themselves during the vigorous period of life in mere sentiment and study, without some object better calculated to call forth their active and combative qualities than continuous sowing and mowing, ploughing and digging, eating and sleeping.

Of course such strictures apply only to farming for revenue. For a man of easy fortune, a country life of thought and study or activity in public affairs, with taste and means for intelligent experiment and practice, is replete with all the occupation, usefulness, and intellectual pleasure that any reasonable person could desire. But as such was by no means the kind of rural life that I could aspire to, I proceeded to engage myself, in

1848, to a Philadelphia map publisher who undertook to teach me how to keep his accounts, for which I was to receive the compensation of three dollars a week. As I did not prove an inapt scholar, this was soon increased to four, and then to five dollars, upon which I managed to pay board and live till November, when my cousin, Dr. Mifflin Wistar, who with his wife was about to travel in the South for health, invited me to accompany them, and though my master offered a partnership interest, and did actually print my name on some of his maps, the temptation was much too strong to be resisted.

We sailed from New York on the *S. S. Northerner* some time during November, and had a stormy and inclement voyage to Charleston, in which both quarter-boats were lost and some other damage sustained. Though the passage was not long, it furnished an incident which, though small in itself, served to reveal a new and somewhat amusing page in the opening book of my individual experience. For fear of accidents and separation my cousin had supplied me with the sum of one hundred dollars in the form of ten gold eagles, which for greater security my dear mother had sewed up in my trousers watch-fob to be used only in emergency. Now my stateroom-mate was not an ornamental person, nor—as I too late remembered—calculated to inspire much confidence. Though numerous peculiarities fully established the descent he claimed from the Pilgrim Fathers, he now hailed from Georgia, and belonged to that second-hand variety of the Puritans there familiarly known as ‘galvanized Yankees.’ Each night of the voyage on removing my trousers, I placed them under my head, after carefully feeling that the contents of the fob were all right. When the vessel had arrived alongside the dock and after many passengers had left, to render assurance doubly sure, I ripped open the fob, but instead of the bright golden eagles found the same number of old fashioned copper cents! As it was the largest amount I had ever possessed and the catastrophe reflected deeply on my ability to take care of myself, much less to assist anyone else, I made an awful fuss, but my bird had flown and except the sympathy of my cousins, all the satisfaction I ever got was plenty of good round nautical abuse from the Captain for

not placing in his charge what I was so evidently unable to take care of myself. But though my cousin lost the money, I think perhaps I gained its value in experience.

As we were abundantly supplied with letters and credentials and found the southern people hospitable and kind, I did not fail to enjoy myself keenly and made many delightful acquaintances in Charleston and Savannah. About the first of February we went in search of a yet milder climate to St. Augustine, then a small and entirely Spanish town still surrounded by its ancient walls, and containing but one shop supplied by one annual schooner from New York. Very little or no English was spoken, except among the few northern visitors who congregated at the only public-house, a small frame building called like its present splendid successor, the Magnolia. Leaving this place after a few weeks by stage for Picolata on the St. John's, we went thence by a small-decked steam launch to Enterprise, then simply a sugar farm recently started on Lake Monroe by Dr. Wurdeman of Charleston with twenty or thirty of his negroes. The plantation having failed as such, the house and negroes had been let to one Henning, who kept it open as a boarding-house for northern people in search of health or sport.

With the exception of a small cabin a mile or two distant, belonging to a hunter named Damaster, it was the only house on the lake and in fact the only inhabited place above Palatka, more than a hundred miles below. The neighboring woods were then full of game, deer and turkeys frequently coming close to the house. Black bass of large size abounded in the lake and all neighboring waters. Alligators swarmed in the rivers and along every sunny bank, and nothing was wanting to complete the happiness of a lad fond of hunting and adventure. But though nothing could exceed my enjoyment of that delightful period so full of novelty to me, I was sensible that it did not tend to much advancement in those practical pursuits which in the absence of fortune, were so essential to me, and I hailed with joy the summons I there received which led to a resumption of the hard work of life, by a novel sort of route, which though for many years it involved privation, toil and peril, served as a useful

introduction to the work of maturer years, and which I have never since in the least regretted.

In Savannah and St. Augustine I had become acquainted with a number of more or less educated but impecunious youths of my own age and equally fond of adventure, all like myself with their own fortunes to seek. To us had come like fire to tow the celebrated report of Col. Mason to the War Department, confirming to a certain extent the stories of the discovery of gold in great quantities, far away across the mountains, plains and deserts in the then unknown and almost mythical land of California. Here was offered a combination of fortune-hunting and adventure unequalled since the days of the buccaneers, and well-nigh irresistible—not alone to us, but to the adventurous and ambitious youth of the whole country, who, in fact, swarmed in tens of thousands by every route known and unknown, possible and impossible, to the promised land. Across and through the wild fastnesses of the continent, around Cape Horn, through the unknown interiors of Mexico and Central America, along every route and by every conceivable method pushed forth swarms of adventurers who, leaving thousands to perish by the way, failed not to press onward despite all obstacles, to the long-sought spot; and the splendid Anglo-Saxon empire they have there reared is now well known to all mankind, and already begins to constitute a fascinating page of history.

The movement struck me in a susceptible spot, for I had always been hankering after the adventures of the plains and mountains. Letters had gone forth in all directions from Savannah and St. Augustine for a muster of kindred spirits who were to follow me to Enterprise when the undertaking should have been got into practical shape. Meantime I had at Enterprise, formed acquaintance with Mr. Warren D. Gookin, an American who having abandoned a successful business of sugar planting in Cuba on account of domestic bereavement, had engaged himself with persons in New York to go out in the following spring to Para, Brazil, to take charge of a rice mill near that place. With him I had conditionally arranged that after crossing the continent by land, if I found the condition of affairs in California exaggerated,

as was somewhat expected, I was to work my way by vessel down to Truxillo, or some other favorably situated Peruvian port, and thence, crossing the Andes and descending the Amazon, join him at Para, bringing actual personal knowledge of that vast, teeming interior and its products. Affairs being in this expectant condition, the poking semi-monthly mail from St. Augustine at last brought the promised letter, from which I learned of my friend's success in organizing a party of twelve—including myself—who had now scattered to their various homes in Georgia and Florida, pledged to rendezvous as early as possible after the middle of March (1849) at Independence, Missouri, there to obtain animals and outfit, and start thence whenever the young prairie grass should be sufficiently grown to sustain animals. Each was to be possessed of at least a hundred dollars, besides the necessary arms, ammunition and blankets.

Fortunately for my part of the scheme, my cousins had concluded to start North earlier than first contemplated, and toward the end of March we reached Aiken, S. C., whence I preceded them to Philadelphia, arriving there April 2, 1849. My father, family and friends were all, of course, averse to the project and used every effort to dissuade me, my grandfather even offering to advance some capital for me to commence business with, at home. But the long-cherished fascinations of the prairies and mountains, not to mention the golden prospects beyond, had got my mind into a condition proof against all sober reason, and when fully convinced of it, my father presented me with a hundred dollars, another friend, with a fine half ounce calibre rifle, and in company with Dr. William Gambel, assistant curator of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, a young naturalist and author already of some distinction, I started at 11 P.M., April 5, 1849, on an expedition which led me during many years through much wild and precarious adventure, and directly or indirectly shaped all my future life and career.

From the old station at Eighth and Market streets, Gambel and I traveled by rail via Baltimore to Cumberland, then the western terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio R. R., and thence by stage-coach over the national turnpike, through one of the

most varied and beautiful portions of the United States, to Wheeling. The coach was well-filled, and we had an opportunity of walking up the numerous hills, and admiring that fine scenery, but little of which can be leisurely enjoyed by the railroad travelers of the present day. We took a steamer to Cincinnati, where the uncertainty of the steamboats obliged us to remain a day or two, and where I purchased a wagon actually in street use, which struck my fancy as a light, strong shortcoupled vehicle adapted to the purpose. I was not without experience with wagons, having hauled many a load of hay from, and of manure to, my father's farm, and in this instance I made no mistake, for that wagon proved to be one of the only two of our entire outfit which survived the searching trials of the rocks and mountains, of alkali plains and desiccating deserts, and actually reached the Pacific coast.

Between Cincinnati and St. Louis we had the novelty, to us, of a long and exciting race with a rival steamer, both carrying hard crowds of California emigrants. Several times we barely escaped collision and on each occasion rifles and pistols were flourished, but not discharged. At St. Louis—guided by letters from the party at Independence—I purchased flour, bacon and other necessary articles, and took passage with them by steamer up the Missouri, Gambel remaining a day or longer for some purposes of his own or because he preferred more leisurely traveling. The very first night out, the cholera—then raging throughout the country—broke out on board with virulence, and as under the unfavorable circumstances of irregular diet and a crowded and dirty steamer, its effects were quick and deadly, a great panic ensued and many of our noisiest braggarts became suddenly endowed with a lamblike meekness. Some eighteen or twenty poor fellows died and were laid out on deck till enough corpses accumulated, when they were buried, wrapped only in their blankets, in shallow holes hastily dug by the deck-hands on river islands, the boat barely stopping long enough for the purpose. I had a severe though short attack, but as my bunk-mate was unwilling under the circumstances to share my bunk, and could get no other, he had leisure to look after and give me much necessary

attention, and when five or six days later we arrived at Independence landing, three miles from the town, I was already sufficiently recovered to go about my affairs, after a fashion.

After no end of trouble and running about, in which I received the willing aid of many others who had passed through similar experience, the party was at last found encamped on the farm of Colonel Ralston, a short distance from the town. This gentleman was himself formerly an emigrant from Kentucky, now a prosperous resident of this place with a large farm, plenty of stock, and quite a large number of negroes, for a frontier farmer. He gave us much aid and advice which we badly needed. I have since heard that one of his numerous small children then running about the premises, many years afterwards became the wife of the celebrated Jesse James, who still later acquired a certain notoriety of the Robin Hood variety, which during the six or seven years of his career, spread widely over the country and penetrated every corner of the United States. I was not long in taking up my abode at the camp, where I was joyfully received. A detachment had just returned from the Ozark country in southern Missouri with some thirty wild, unbroken two-year-old mules, the best to be had, but of whom only five or six had ever felt a collar. We all fell at once to work on these *ferae naturae*, and had a high old time breaking them to harness and hauling stores from the landing, four miles distant. They were lassoed, thrown, harnessed, and dragged into place by sheer and simple force, to which only they were in the least amenable. Then the most experienced or ambitious driver proceeded to seat himself on the tamest mule, selected for the wheel, and the other preparations being completed, the circus began. Each animal had a rope with a choking-noose around his neck, at the other end of which was a mad and excited individual who walked, ran, jumped, fell, swore, and was dragged alongside, as long as the procession continued to move. When it stopped to repair damages and pick the tangled men and mules out of the heap, we all had time to count our bumps and bruises, while the least-damaged or the best-tempered got things straightened out for a new start.

Independence and its vicinity was a strange and peculiar place to eastern eyes. It had been for many years the favorite seat and outfitting place for the great packmule and wagon trains engaged in the Santa Fé trade, by which Chihuahua, Durango and the northern and least-known parts of Mexico, were then and until the later days of railroads, supplied with manufactured commodities. This once-famous trade had made the place rich and populous, and though within twenty miles of the Indian frontier, beyond which not a house or a settler was allowed by the general government, and within a few days' ride of actively hostile Indians, it had become a large and wealthy place. Nevertheless, as every man in it, of any standing, was or had been a New Mexican trader, Indian fighter or some other kind of adventurer, its whole population from the successful and wealthy traders down to the people who herded their animals and drove their teams, bore a rather tough reputation. Even its peculiar appearance indicated the unique character, interests and occupation of its inhabitants. Some of the wealthiest citizens, millionaires even, then when fortunes were so much smaller than at present, were considered the most dangerous and lawless, and if they did not take a pride in such reputations, were not in the least averse to them, and never slow to earn and maintain them. In winter when they came in from their various errands on and beyond the far-reaching plains, there was gathered a population amounting to several thousand, with plenty of leisure and taste for pleasure, as there understood.

But during the temperate portion of the year, its adventurous people were scattered about over thousands of miles of territory, some on long and dangerous journeys occupying years of time, and the place was comparatively deserted. In some low-lying ground and meadows adjacent, at least fifty or more acres of old and worn-out Santa Fé wagons were falling to decay, and in and around it were at that time encamped several thousand strangers, comprising emigrants, hunters, trappers, Indian and fur traders, besides stock dealers, gamblers, teamsters and all sorts of loafers and desperadoes, including many of wide frontier renown. Fights and homicides were of frequent occurrence and though always entertaining to the spectators,

caused little other sensation. It was perhaps as well for us who were much inclined to see—if not to emulate—these novelties, that the breaking and working of our wild mules gave us plenty of employment elsewhere. Sublette, Hudspeth, 'Peg-leg' Smith, and other famous "mountain men" were then at Independence and never wanted an admiring and inquisitive crowd about them. These were the first of the celebrated trappers or "mountain men" whom I had seen, the type of others with whom it was later my lot to associate during long periods, far from men and civilization.⁵

On both sides of the British border-line their race has long since disappeared with the fur trade, though while it continued to exist, they were no ignoble types of the men developed by the perils and exigencies of the mountains and the wilderness. Carrying their lives in their hands, rarely encumbered with baggage or provisions but trusting to a thorough understanding of all the resources of nature, alone or in pairs they penetrated every known and unknown corner of the continent, trading, trapping, fighting or concealing themselves even from the keen-eyed Indian, as occasion required, and there remains today no country or condition in the world to develop or breed a similar

⁵ At this time occurred a famous fight which may perhaps still be remembered in the stirring annals of Independence. The celebrated mountain man, 'Peg-leg' Smith, possessed a wooden leg as a substitute for the original—which he had himself amputated with his hunting knife, taking up the arteries with a bullet mould—when it had been irremediably smashed by an Indian bullet, at some solitary spot in the mountains. Now 'Peg-leg' was as timidly modest and retiring as a young girl, when he was sober, but not being proof against the festive attractions of Independence, he had on this occasion become pretty drunk and all the bar-rooms were locked against him till he should resume his usual peaceful disposition. He therefore blew off the lock of one of them with his rifle and entered upon four border-desperadoes, deep in the fascinations of 'poker,' who instantly opened fire. 'Peg-leg's' gun being empty, he promptly jerked off his hickory leg and at one blow extinguished all the candles on the table and began feeling for the enemy. The general net result of the engagement was—two men killed by the wooden leg, another hors de combat, and the fourth, shot with a captured weapon as he was making his way out. Having been variously wounded in the encounter, 'Peg-leg's' blood was now up, and he was for remaining to fight the town, but his friends applied the 'similia similibus curantur' and with the aid of more whiskey, managed to get him away among the Kaw Indians across the boundary and no one in Independence hankered for the job of capturing this famous character on the open prairie.

race. Though ready for any adventure and shrinking from no peril, these men were habitually silent, grave and gentle-mannered, sharply contrasting with the professional rustlers and bullies who infested the frontier, loudly boasting of their exploits, but quickly punctured and exposed when they ventured a contact with those quiet but resolute characters of modest voice but determined action.

The far-reaching trade of the several great fur companies, bred up many of those famous characters, most of American birth on our side the boundary line, but beyond it, of Canadian, French or Scotch descent, including many half-breeds of all those races.

The Hudson Bay Company though always managed by its London and Montreal directors with consummate skill, and a humane tact toward its native population which has unfortunately found little imitation on our side the line, nevertheless owes a large proportion of its long-continued prosperity to its Canadian French and Scottish governors, agents and factors and their half-breed descendants—the famous metis. These have for generations constituted the major part of its agents, clerks, traders and trappers, who penetrated its remote territories, conducted its trade, located and held its posts, and though often illiterate, have been without exception as far as I ever heard, honest, enterprising, brave and faithful. In the altered circumstances of the Company, which since parting with its rights of sovereignty to the Dominion, now devotes its attention principally to farming, cattle-breeding, fisheries, and miscellaneous trading, it is probable that most of the unique class referred to have disappeared, and perhaps little now survives of them except the quaint and expressive names, either translated from the Indian or commemorating some once famous fight or adventure, that still lingers about obscure and distant streams and summits, and even these are being fast supplanted with the less pertinent but more familiar names of Smith, Jones and Robinson, by Washington politico-scientists who know or care not for the sentiment and poetry of their origin and associations.

We gradually and with much tribulation reduced our mules to a condition that might be called hostile subjection, that is

to say, where the subject, while in the main yielding to force and necessity, maintains a noble and gallant spirit of subdued revolt, always watchful and ready to seize every opportunity for liberty, if possible—if not, for vengeance. We supplied our wagons with spare poles and axles, double covers, water casks and other necessities, and with all such preparations complete, struck tents and made a start on April 25th. But the first essay proved a continuous mule fight, aggravated by slippery hills, countless mud holes, and a steady industrious rain which defied all reasonable prognostications by coming down almost as soon as we had started. After making but five miles we encamped, covered with mud, wet, disgusted and worn-out. The first night of such expeditions—as I have often since had occasion to know—is always discouraging. The men have not found out each other's real qualities, the teams are 'soft,' and soon become exhausted or devilish, or both, the things most wanted cannot be found, and on this initial occasion we found ourselves in anything but a joyous mood. To find water and wood, take care of the animals and harness, set a guard and prepare supper, all that is never very attractive occupation, after dark and in the rain, but for our brand-new and inexperienced party—of whom the oldest was but twenty-two—tired, wet, hungry, and discouraged, it was particularly disagreeable. However, it was done, and when we waked in the morning with a glorious sun gilding and glorifying everything with his warm and joyous beams, our spirits promptly came back to par. Even the fervent desire to kill his favorite mule which had pervaded every breast the day before, yielded to more genial feelings, though soon to be revived with redoubled ardor.

From the diary which I kept after leaving the State Line, I find that we started sixteen in all, with thirty-five mules and a few Indian ponies belonging to individuals of hunting proclivities, for riding purposes. Dr. Gambel had joined himself to five Virginians who with their one wagon and eight mules traveled with us. For provisions we had at first flour, hard-tack, bacon, beans, coffee, sugar and salt, and for other lading, two wall tents, some extra harness, mule shoes and nails, cooking

utensils, carpenter's, digging and pioneer's tools, as well as some simple medicines and other necessities. For private property each had blankets, arms, ammunition and tobacco, and Seaborn Jones also possessed an excellent young negro who had acquired some useful experience during the late Mexican war, as servant to his elder brother, a voltigeur officer in General Scott's campaign. The experience of the first day's march admonished us that some additional preparation might not be wasted, so we remained a few days longer at our first camp, and it was not till May 2d that we at last crossed the State Line into the Indian country, and—as the sailors say—‘took our departure.’

A country beautifully undulating, and bursting everywhere with the buds of early spring, nevertheless furnished us with a hilly, uneven and sometimes slippery road, with deep, muddy sloughs in every intermediate hollow; and with our raw drivers, untamed mules, overloaded wagons, and continual April showers, our tribulations and difficulties were at first quite disheartening to many. As if to cap the disagreeables, S. J., who had remained behind to look after his negro Milton, who was ill, now overtook us with the alarming intelligence that the disease had been identified as smallpox, which was not particularly encouraging to the rest of us, who had been living in such close association with him. Jones had been obliged to leave Milton in charge of an old negro woman belonging to Colonel Ralston, who promised to look after him and ship him home to Georgia, in case of his recovery. It was not till several years afterward that I learned that the negro did recover, and was shipped by express with a label sewed to his breast, from Independence to Paulding county, Georgia, and arrived there safely! In these days of railroads and continental express companies, that may not seem so very remarkable, but at that time there were few or no railroads west of the Alleghenies, and the whole distance, which must have been at least 1200 miles, could only be traversed by stagecoach and steamboat, or on foot.

For the purpose of conveying a fresh or contemporaneous idea of the long and weary, but interesting journey now fairly commenced, I cannot do better than copy here my diary written

at the time, considerably abbreviated, but otherwise nearly in the language then used.

May 3rd. The first day out from the State Line, dawned with a steady, soaking, business-like rain. I tried to sleep under the wagon last night—for which places there was a lively competition as the tents were not pitched—but soon crawled out from a puddle collected in the depression made by my body in the mud, and sat on my rolled-up blanket under the wagon, but as the howling wind blew the rain everywhere, I took little benefit from the shelter. Notwithstanding the condition of the weather, the roads and ourselves, all hands agreed that it was no wetter moving along than sitting in the mud, while the former offered a chance of finding some other place to camp with more shelter and some fuel, so we harnessed up after a breakfast of wet hardtack and raw bacon, and pulled out. The country in any decent weather would be beautiful, being rolling and well-timbered in the hollows with fine hickory, oak, and walnut, and as far as the Line, shows a few settlements, fences and houses. West of the Line the country belongs to the Indian Territory, and is uninhabited except by wandering Indians. In this vicinity, these are Pottawatomies, who with remnants of other removed tribes, all friendly but thievish, extend for a hundred miles or more, which distance will bring us to the Pawnees, who are counted intractable and hostile. Grass, though as yet little grown, is abundant, and all the hollows at this time of the year contain water. No doubt the country must some day become the seat of a dense and wealthy population. With a little more comfort and less work to do, one might even now enjoy its lovely grassy hills, and richly-timbered creek-bottoms full of deer and turkeys.

May 4th. Rain, with intermissions, constantly emphasized by plenty of thunder and lightning. This morning it was hard to get ourselves limber enough to water and repicket the mules, who notwithstanding the bitter hatred they justly inspire, must be preserved. After carrying some scarce and green wood over a mile, it took the whole water-soaked party two hours to coax it into a fire, after which we took our coffee, hardtack and bacon standing round the fire, well soaked by the falling rain. After a

series of desperate and gallant mule fights we 'caught up' in the afternoon and 'rolled on.' After sticking in numerous mud holes, digging, prying and in some cases doubling teams, we were at last brought to a stand by an impassable slough, not much over a mile from our last camp.

May 5th. Raining most of the night and morning with the same hearty, honest steadiness as ever. But the place was too comfortless to stop at, and by filling the slough with brush and putting three teams to a wagon, we at last got across, and tugging over slippery hills and sticking in countless mud holes, covered about five miles, and are encamped on a high roll of the prairie, which sinks away behind us a short distance to the Big Blue, a fine stream skirted with good timber. The sky has cleared, and the moon lights up a far-stretching series of round grassy hill-tops in front. There is plenty of wood, and around some generous fires all the wet clothes and blankets are sending up clouds of steam while every one is cheerful with the prospect of a better time tomorrow. The river is high and may give trouble, but notwithstanding the good rule, to camp always on the far side of a stream, we were too much used up to try it tonight.

May 6th, Sunday. We had hardly suspended our execrations of the weather, when the rain began again this morning, with increased vigor, as if under conscientious obligation to make up for the valuable time lost. But now we have the tents set and plenty of wood and are comfortable ourselves, while as for the mules, we hope they are suffering as much as is compatible with their duties tomorrow. The road may now be called impassable for loaded wagons. The mules cannot maintain a footing on the slippery hills, while each intermediate little valley is a bottomless morass in which the wagons plump to the axles. But the mules are perceptibly tamer, and it is now possible to go within stone's-throw of them without open war; and they even seem to be taking in the notion that it is easier to give a good pull all together, than to jump over each other's backs and kick and bite at everything within reach. Two of our men have had fun enough, and have concluded to go back, but the rest, including the Virginians, are staunch and will stick, come what may. When

the mules get tame and can be managed by two men to a wagon, it is thought we have men enough for labor and guard detail, but at present, affairs go hardly, because although the Indians give no trouble, the mules must nevertheless be well guarded to prevent their running back to the settlements, a direction they much prefer. There is a large camp below us on the Blue, badly afflicted with cholera, of which five have died, two of them last night.

May 7th. The train rolled out at daylight leaving S. J., myself and A. as rearguard to gather up the loose mules. In returning separately from that job, I passed the deserted camp which the crows and buzzards were beginning to examine, and seeing a buffalo-robe, as I supposed, forgotten, I tried to pick it up but my Texas pony would not approach it. After discussing the matter with him warmly but fruitlessly, I dismounted, rolled it up compactly and secured it to my riata, the other end of which was fast to the saddle. Then remounting, I dragged it to me, but when it came dangling under the horse's nose he voted decisively against the scheme, every time. Finally, after considerable circus-riding, he fell over backward, giving me just time to slip from under, but as I was bruised and confused, he got away and ran off careering over the prairie with the obnoxious object dragging behind. After a while it got detached, and he fell to grazing, but was always prompt to start again as soon as I approached, and as by this time the train was out of sight, I began to fear seriously that I might have to leave him. But after long and wily manoeuvring I at last got hold of the riata, and my temper by this time not being in its sweetest condition, I determined to break or kill him, and after some more fighting, succeeded in the former, and putting him to a gallop, forded the river and came up to the train just as it came to camp some miles beyond. Here on indignantly throwing down the innocent cause of the commotion I had the satisfaction of learning that, having belonged to the negro Milton, it had been purposely abandoned as probably infected with smallpox! Though I had hugged it closely during a gallop of several miles while in a profuse perspiration, I was never troubled with the disease, though cholera or fatal diarrhoea is prevalent among the emigrant trains, which

are numerous, not having had time yet to get much scattered. There is quite a populous graveyard at the crossing of the Blue, and numerous single graves along the trail. Today we sent back J., who has been ill since the first exposed rainy night. He was left with his friend G. to care for him, at Lipscombe's—the 'last house.' There is a good deal of discouragement but much of it is due to the weather, which can hardly be a fair sample. We must surely have an improvement sooner or later, and with dry roads, tame mules and more practical experience, things must go better after a while. We made nine miles and camped, to see how it goes with J. We passed a rough stone monument of dry masonry, ten feet high, on an eminence on the right, with a smaller one near by, and another half a mile distant on an opposite hill. By whom or for what purpose erected, there is no means of knowing, but we guess they commemorate the departure of some former Oregon-bound emigrant train. We also saw some deer on the distant ridge near a projecting point of timber, but had no time to go after them. We are camped on a rich, well-timbered bottom, and had for supper a heterogeneous mass, boiled together in the camp kettle, of rabbits, grouse, snipe, curlew, etc. It is to be hoped that the splendid opportunity now offering may ultimately develop a cooking talent in some one, for which there is a rare and brilliant opening.

CHAPTER III

DIARY OF JOURNEY ACROSS PRAIRIE

May 8th. Waiting in camp on J.'s illness. If it should be smallpox we will be in a bad way, as we could neither carry him on, nor expect Lipscombe to keep him in his one-roomed log-cabin. To empty a wagon and haul him back to Independence would cause delay that might have serious results, in case we should arrive at the Sierra too late to cross this year, about which our fellows are already nervous.

May 9th. Rode back last night and left two spare mules at Lipscombe's for J. and G. to overtake us with, in case the former should recover. They can easily do it for several days yet, as the wagons move slowly. This morning we rolled out early and in good spirits—except for J.—the blue sky and bright sun reflected in every face, and looking as if they had come to stay. The prairie is covered with lovely flowers brought out by the sun, making some of the little sheltered valleys sheets of beautiful colors. Hitherto we have followed the old well-beaten Santa Fé trail, but now bend off to the north, being encamped tonight at its junction with the Oregon emigrant trail, with wood scarce, but good grass and water not far off. The country is beautiful, being a succession of high, round, grassy ridges with running water in the hollows, and distant points of timber nearly always in sight. We made seventeen miles and passed numerous fresh graves, besides many dead cattle and mules. At noon we passed the 'lone elm,' standing by a chain of water pools, a famous landmark for east-bound Santa Fé trains. How it came to grow here alone, and why no other tree or even bush has joined it in its isolation, none of our scientists can explain.

May 10th. Leaving camp at an early hour, we plodded on

over very much the same kind of country as yesterday, but encountered two or three mud holes with nearly vertical banks, which even after considerable pick and shovel work, stalled all the teams. The worst was at the crossing of an insignificant stream about ten miles from the Santa Fé fork, where the bottom was so miry, and the banks so steep and high, that the crossing of our five wagons detained us more than two hours. At 4 P.M. we struck the Wakarusa, a fine running creek of about twenty yards' width, in a timbered bottom half a mile wide, the shade and whispering verdure of which was a delightful thing to our eyes, already somewhat tired of the bare monotony of the illimitable grassy prairie. The bluff on the west side, though no more than thirty or forty feet high, was so steep that it required doubled teams and all hands at the wheels to pull out. Fortunately it was neither muddy nor slippery. In fact, we like the Wakarusa, which besides its lovely marginal forest, is a beautiful swift-flowing stream with a bold ledge of exposed limestone on our side—carved into fantastic shapes by water and ice action, and a steep wooded bluff on the other. Though now running full, from the frequent rains, it looks favorable for fish, but in two hours honest trial I only got one weak nibble, and returned to my bacon.

May 11th. On the road by 7 A.M. today, having turned out before daylight for an early start. Two hours brought us to a singularly shaped hill. It is plainly of natural limestone formation, but from its shape, presenting bold projecting salients all around, and a succession of terraces, due to the more rapid weathering of the upper and more exposed strata, it looks like a great fortification with successive walls, gradually retiring as they rise one above the other. The wagon trail breasts it boldly and leads directly over the top. From the summit there is a superb view of rolling prairie, stretching interminably in every direction from its base to the far edge of the saucer-like horizon. Looking back over the thin, faint line of road we have just passed, Bryant's train of 170 pack mules was just coming into view, straggling along far, far beneath us, like an army of mice. Shouts and whoops came faintly up to us, and so cheerfully dry was the prairie, that the dust from their 700

hoofs hung over them like a moving canopy. Far southward appears another bend of the timber lining the Wakarusa, which stream after a long detour to the right of the trail, here sweeps away again to the southwest, bound for the Kaw river, we suppose. The march today has been, as usual, over a perpetual series of gently undulating hills, one rising beyond another on all sides, through and among which we are perpetually winding to avoid steep ascents. We seem confined in a deep, vast, green bowl, whose encircling sides we are constantly striving in vain to surmount. The horizon presents the illusion of rising higher than ourselves on all sides, and even when we gain a hilltop, it only discloses an illimitable succession of others, without distinctive landmarks, and with views, vistas, landscape and scenery, so precisely alike, that except for the sun and compass and our tired muscles, it would be hard to realize any movement.

B. produced a few curlew and cowbirds tonight, the product of his shot-gun, unfortunately the only one in the party, and these varied pleasantly the usual hungry rush to slapjacks and bacon. Notwithstanding, the rain has followed us and commenced drizzling again after the unusually liberal allowance of two days' sunshine.

May 12th. J. and G. overtook us last night, the former much worse for his ride, though considered nearly recovered when they left Lipscombe's. After a hard march we camped tonight on a small tributary of the Kaw, or Kansas, and within a few miles of that river, which must be crossed tomorrow. The camp has been made near a dead ox, which doesn't enhance its attractions, but the rain has ceased and we are all agog to put the Kansas behind us tomorrow. A large train is camped nearby, waiting for the same purpose, which has lost several men from cholera and still has some bad cases in the wagons. Two heavy ox-trains came up in the rear, passed, and camped ahead of us.

May 13th, Sunday. Rolled out early to reach the crossing, if possible, in advance of the large trains near us. As we passed these, some were burying a man just dead of cholera, while the others were catching up their teams. The five or six miles of road leading to the crossing was bad, and we stalled and had to

double teams several times, but reached the place by 8 A.M. to find still other trains ahead, all squabbling for precedence. Some enterprising emigrants preferring a bird in hand to several in the California bush, had built a small scow capable of transporting a single wagon without the team, and naturally every one wanted to be the first. We rushed our wagons in, simultaneously detaching a mule guard to drive the mules up stream to find a good swimming place. The bulk of our men—including our best fighters—closed in round the wagons, in the narrow passage leading to the landing and allowed no teams to pass. Words were high, and weapons were drawn, but as our party though not one third as numerous, were fairly organized, and had agreed to leave our talking to a captain and obey him closely, system, firmness, and discipline prevailed over numbers, and we got and kept the *pass*. We worked hard most of the day, in crossing our wagons and stores, and repacking them on the other side, and in making our initial mule crossing. The mule ford was narrow and crooked, with swimming depth in the middle, and a rapid current; but by leading with mounted men, and crowding the rest in by force over a steep bank which we did not allow them to reclimb, we finally got all across safely, though with considerable excitement to the mulish nervous system. A strong contrast to the laborious energy and effort with which the white man pursues his aims, was afforded by a squad of indolent Pottawatomies, who sauntered about, splendidly dressed in white deerskins ornamented with black cloth, small sleigh bells, ribbons, feathers, and so forth, intensely amused at our tribulations and highly delighted at the excellent promise of a shindy among the white men. Their horses, though not apparently of much value, were richly caparisoned with scarlet cloth, and similar ornaments. One well got up fellow, who most probably had visited the settlements in person to get so much finery, was delighted at a mishap of mine in falling into the water, and concealed his hilarity with difficulty as he gleefully felt me down to see how wet I was. B. caught a catfish at least two feet long, which made supper for our entire party. It was unkindly suggested that he had cheated some guileless Pottawatomie, but as he indignantly denied the imputation on his

skill, and everyone was glad to enjoy the change from the everlasting bacon, we agreed not to discuss too closely the mode of acquisition. We found deep, dry sand on the other bank of the river, and after getting clear of it about a mile, we encamped at the edge of the prairie.

May 14th. Spent this day in camp owing to the serious illness of H. which Gambel now pronounces to be pneumonia, and no great wonder, considering the bad weather, labor and exposure we have had. It has been severe on all of us, and a provoking consideration is the conviction that with more experience and less haste, we might have avoided a considerable part of it. The rain has recommenced as perseveringly as ever.

May 15th. A steady, beastly downpour kept us in a camp of very indifferent merits all day till 4 P.M. when, the rain having moderated and H.'s condition improved, we 'caught up' and proceeded about two miles, when we were stopped by a creek with bad banks, and deep muddy approaches. The stream is a pretty one about twenty-five yards wide, with a little poor timber, but as its passage is hopeless at present, we moved down it about half a mile and camped. Two pretty well-mounted Pottawatomies rode into camp, to whom we gave about a bag and a half of flour, by way of reducing our loads, but though they received it, and will surely find a way to make it useful, not a word or sign acknowledged the gift.

May 16th. About an hour after dark last night, as all except the guard were seated round the fire, a single mule, frightened at something, drew his picket and started on a run, but soon brought up among the herd grazing at their pickets, who declined to take part in his scare. We had scarcely finished congratulating each other when suddenly and without the slightest warning, another scare occurred, followed by a wild rush of mules, amounting to a stampede. The night was dark and rainy and the ground soft, but only about half succeeded in drawing their picket pins. We all scattered out, ringing vigorously the mare's bell, while the guard mounted and galloped off, guided by the noise, to head and turn them back. After an hour or more of strenuous exertion and not a little anxiety, we secured them all

and allowed them to crowd around the bell mare to get quiet. Divers surmises were offered respecting the cause of this sudden and dangerous freak, some attributing it to Indians, some to wolves, and other to 'natural devilment,' the last theory receiving immediate and general adherence. There was no further alarm, probably because of the increased guard and extra vigilance, and at 2 A.M. all hands were called up by order to prepare for crossing the creek in front. After several hours' hard labor with pick and shovel by relays of men, the approaches were considered fit for trial, and doubling teams and putting all unemployed men at the wheels, we got our five wagons across by 10 A.M. and moved forward. We crossed a number of smaller creeks, gullies and mud holes, some of which gave much trouble. These ditches, or water courses, are much alike. They are mostly ten or twelve feet deep with vertical banks, and of all widths from six to fifty feet, with a trifling runlet in the bottom, converting the latter into a soft quagmire. After picking down the banks somewhat, the team is doubled, which, provided the mules themselves can scramble across, brings the leaders to the top of one bank before the wagon makes its plunge from the other. Consequently, some of the numerous mules are always expected to have good footing, and to be in condition to haul out the rest. But sometimes when the stream is larger and contains considerable water, the mules get entangled with each other in the bottomless mud, and to save them from being carried down and drowned, it is necessary to run in and loose or cut them out. In bad cases it is necessary to unload the wagons, carry everything over, haul out the empty wagon, and reload it, which process, repeated as it must be for each wagon, consumes much time and temper. Taking my turn at driving today, and seated half-asleep on the wheel mule of the rear wagon, which thus fell considerably behind the others, my team suddenly came to a halt which waked me with a start. What was my astonishment to see the two leaders of my six-mule team, poking their noses in the doorway of a quite civilized-looking log cabin, wherein were some twenty or more Indian children, in partly civilized costume, with some French Catholic priests, who had a mission here, and were teaching school. The mules I think, were as

much surprised as I was, and seemed quite disinclined to leave a scene so suggestive of corn and comfort. However, as the other wagons were a long way ahead, I had to decline the polite invitation of the fathers, and travel on. Here also, was an American woman from Baltimore, married to a half-breed Pottawatomie with a cabin and an enclosed field. We camped tonight on the wrong side of another apparently impracticable creek.

May 17th. During my watch, last night, the wolves in considerable numbers were barking and howling round the wagons, indicating an increasing distance from the settlements. The mules endured their presence and noise pretty well, but did not seem to hanker after them like long-lost friends. After the usual digging, pulling, hauling and swearing, we got all our wagons over the creek and made a good morning march to the Little Vermillion, over the bad bluffs of which we crossed with difficulty and halted a mile west of it for a noon rest. One of the wagon companies being too indolent to unharness their team, suffered it to graze about with the wagon attached, intending to watch it. But as might have been expected, the watchers went to sleep, with the result of a short turn, an upset, with broken pole, axle, and hounds. In lightening up our wagons a few days ago, we threw away our spare poles and axles, so we seemed in a bad mess. Several went off to search for hickory or white oak in the creek bottom, while I rode back to see if I could meet an ox train and buy some material. Fortunately, I found Waldo's large train from Jackson county, Missouri, and after some trouble, being warmly seconded by Waldo, I got from one of the wagons an excellent piece of seasoned timber, which was lucky, as our men found no growing timber fit for such use. We soon had a blazing fire, around which all our mechanics and amateurs got at work with as many carpenters' and smiths' tools as could be mustered, and we expect to have it finished by morning.

May 18th. Our artisans—expert and amateur—finished the repairs of the fractured wagon before daylight this morning, and the guard then called all hands for an early start. A fair march was made till shortly after noon, when J., another of our invalids, suddenly became so much worse that Dr. G. advised

a halt, to let him die in peace. As signs of the utmost extremity were visible, we came to camp at once on the top of an extensive stony knoll, with neither wood nor water within sight. The consequence was thirst and hunger, as a little cold coffee and half-warmed dough was all the refreshment we could get, after the greater part of two days' and one night's hard work, with the pleasing prospect to half of us, of watching the mules all night. The Doctor says both men must surely die, though when, no one can certainly tell. In the low condition of spirits prevailing, we have time to reflect that, with all our privations and labor, and the probable loss of two of our number, we have scarcely averaged over eight miles per day from Independence, and this over what we suppose to be the best part of the route, furnishing most grass and water. This poor beginning of a long journey, which will become more difficult and over a less known country the farther we advance, must be attributed to several causes—bad weather and roads, unbroken mules, excessive loads, inexperience in driving and managing mule teams, and most of all, a want of better system and organization. All of these can be cured or would cure themselves, if we had some one person of such manifest superiority in qualities or even in age, as to reconcile everyone to a supreme authority. But unfortunately there is none such, and there seems little use in calling this one captain, and that one wagon-master, etc., when no one will obey anyone else without a fight. Some of the men who expected to enjoy a fine hunting-trip, with little discomfort or privation, are bitterly disappointed. For myself, though I did anticipate more leisure and less hard work, yet I did not expect to have adventure without some privations, and am willing to take it as it comes, even the results of our own defects, since they can't be cured. The route has recently been over a constant succession of prairie rolls, which really amount to considerable hills, though the soil is hard and good except in the hollows and at the numerous creek crossings, which are certainly exasperating. The country previously fertile, is becoming thin and rocky, and the grass thinner and inferior. Having little or no wood tonight, it was proposed to draw on our one can of alcohol. But as there doesn't seem any emergency to justify

using what may be more necessary as fuel or stimulant by and by, it was warmly opposed, and by a slim majority, defeated. J. and H. the Doctor says, are both dying, and G. also is very ill, thus increasing our labor, while seriously reducing our effective force. However, the Virginians came nobly to the breach, in regard to the extra guard duty.

May 19th. Contrary to all expectations, and with the most unfeeling disregard for the Doctor, J., the sickest man, concluded to get better during the night, and we made an early start and accomplished a good distance of excellent road, interspersed with exasperating mud holes, before 10 A.M., when we were overtaken by a tremendous storm of wind and rain. The former, unchecked for long distances over this bare treeless country, amounted to a tempest, sending the wagons forward with slacked traces. While enduring it according to the best of our several abilities, we suddenly found our leading team at the brink of one of the deepest, steepest and muddiest crossings we had yet encountered. Blinded and soaked by the rain, we went to work at smoothing down the banks, and doubling teams, and then went at it. The first wagon pitched headlong over, the whole front running-gears disappearing in a sea of mud, the wagon standing for an instant on its front end. But the forward team drivers were staunch and ready, the tackle held firm, the wagon was dragged through to the opposite bank and with a yell—up she went. This was encouraging; so packing the three sick men in the rear wagon with all the blankets, and lashing them down solid, we got everything over safely, or with trifling damage, and reached the banks of the Big Vermillion early in the afternoon. This is a wide and considerable stream, but with a hard bottom, and not too deep to ford now, though evidently rising. Under these circumstances we decided to cross at once. We soon cut some blocks on which we raised the wagon beds about fifteen inches, being as much as the standards would bear. Then chaining together the two wheels on each side, we lowered the wagons down the long and steep but straight descent, and got them safely through the river, which came up to the raised wagon bodies, and found an easy, good, straight ascent on the other side. We moved

on a mile and camped, to give our fishermen a chance to try the stream, but the freshet prevented successful fishing, though we made an honest effort till dark, by which time the river had risen to an impassable height. We are surely improving, since for the first time when there were two different courses to be pursued, we took the best. Hurrah!

May 20th, Sunday; 18th day out. Sunday brings no rest today. We are so elated at our good conduct yesterday, in camping on the right side of the obstructive stream, and the weather is so threatening, that we decided to push on with a train of ten Indiana and seven Mississippi wagons, by whom we camped last night, twelve or fifteen miles to the Little Blue so as to cross it today, if possible. We reached and crossed it about 1 P.M., descending the eastern side with the aid of ropes and surmounting the far bank without much difficulty. At our crossing, it was about four feet deep and eighty yards wide, with a large island in the middle, and a rapid current. Both trains camped together not far beyond, and one mess caught four fine cats, but mine went fishless, for which I received plenty of sarcasm and abuse, especially from those who had never yet caught, or tried to catch, a fish. Thus is unsuccessful merit apt to be rewarded. The deep solitude and monotony of this region has become oppressive to some, but there is little chance of relief unless from the still more undesirable incident of a dash from some Pawnee war party. So it has been agreed all round, without a dissenting voice, to lay over tomorrow, for the purpose of joining and organizing with the Indiana company, which seems to be composed of rather agreeable fellows, and to have mule teams as good as ours.

May 21st. From daylight till 9 A.M. was spent in general council by all hands of both companies not on actual duty. We elected for captain, Woods,⁶ of Indiana, and also a doctor, a wagon-master, a secretary, etc. We also adopted a few plain rules for traveling, keeping the peace, dividing labor, guard duty, etc. A detail of one man from each wagon was then started down the

⁶ Woods with three companions was killed by the Pitt River Indians, near the head of the Sacramento River in California in 1851, as I learned some years afterwards.

bottom to procure timber for spare poles, axles, and so forth, as this is said to be the last place where timber of any value can be procured. Some very doubtful specimens were brought in, looking much better adapted for back logs than axletrees. About noon we rolled out, made twelve miles, and encamped.

May 25th. Owing to a painful and troublesome return of the Missouri River cholera—or diarrhoea, I have been for the last four days confined to a wagon, with about as much suffering as the wagon could conveniently hold. The weather has been very unpleasant, as on the rare occasions when it doesn't rain, a cold blast is searching the wagon covers, and there is a white frost nearly every night. I don't find things so bad when in health, but there is not much fun in jolting over the stony plains in a freezing gale, racked by a compound of ague, fever, diarrhoea, cholera and headache, with the consciousness that some other fellow is not blessing one for having extra duty to perform. However, I am today much better and able to get some variation from the misery of that infernal wagon by an occasional relief on horseback, which is a most agreeable change. We have been making a steady progress of eighteen to twenty miles a day, following the course of the Little Blue. The joint company numbers seventy-six men (exclusive of four who have died since leaving Independence) and one hundred and thirty animals, including six yoke of oxen driven along loose by Wood's men, and intended for passing mud holes otherwise insurmountable, and ultimately for food. Antelopes, which were first seen on the 22nd, near the crossing of the Blue, are now becoming abundant. In fact they are in sight pretty much all day.

May 26th. In spite of the guard, a stampede occurred last night about midnight, the entire 'mulada' suddenly breaking out of the corral and rushing off over the plain with a thundering tread that turned everyone out at once. The new rules, however, worked well; all the posted men were quickly at their designated posts, rifle in hand, the remainder rushing out after the mules. The bell mare being secure, her bell was well rattled, and inside of an hour the truants were all back in the corral, and everything safe. Nevertheless, as we are now in the hostile country of the

Pawnees, who are doubtless watching all our movements, one can't help thinking what a mess we would be in, if the mules did get fairly away from us. We have therefore determined to use some extra care and precaution. During the day our fifteen wagons are, of course, strung out in a long line, interspersed with foot- and horsemen, the rear covered by the guard driving the loose stock. But it is night attacks or alarms that we have most to apprehend, so hereafter the Captain will, about camping-time, send a few men ahead to look out a good place, combining as far as possible such advantages as grass, wood, water, shelter from wind, and a reasonable view of the surrounding country. On coming into camp, the wagon-master will take his station at the spot designed for the leading wagon, each succeeding wagon filing off alternately to right and left and taking position outside and rear of its predecessor, to constitute the first half of the corral, and conversely, by drawing them together for the last half, thus making a large circular or oval enclosure. The wagons are then connected by the poles and track chains, leaving the only opening at the rear, which constitutes post No. 1 of the guard.

The mules are turned out to water and grass under charge of the retiring or day guard, till after supper, when the new guard takes charge. Such tents as have not been thrown away, are pitched round the outside, where also fires are made and cooking conducted, the inside of the corral being reserved entirely for the animals. The men unprovided with tents sleep in or under the wagons, with weapons accessible. In the morning those not on guard, gather up and pack away baggage, lay the harness in place, and stand ready for the arrival of the mules. These, after being watered, are driven in through the rear opening, and all available hands proceed to select, harness, and attach their respective teams. When all is ready the night guard is relieved, the new one taking charge of the rear, including loose stock. At the signal for 'rolling out,' the lead wagon remains stationary, the others pulling out on each side alternately, to their allotted positions in line, the leader of yesterday dropping to the rear today, thus giving each its fair proportion of front and rear. At every halt by day or night, the bell mare is securely picketed, and in the event of an

alarm, is immediately seized by the Captain of the guard, and either mounted, or fastened to a wagon inside of the corral, the guard hustling the other mules in after her. The mare is white—for easy recognition both by men and mules. She is about eight years old, which is quite venerable compared with her adoring followers, and she has nothing to do but carry the bell and exert her fascinations on the mules, who, judging by their constant condition of terror when separated from her, must have been born scared and remained so ever since. Notwithstanding her immunity from work, however, the bell mare has a pretty hard time. Being always picketed and closely surrounded by her admirers, her grazing is by no means the best. By night or day, as soon as the mules have filled their bellies, their next object is to crowd in and fight for positions close to the mare. If a scare occurs, they watch her, rather than the supposed cause. If she remains unconcerned, as she generally does, they soon quiet down, but if she begins to stretch her neck and prick her ears, there is going to be trouble.

The Little Blue, notwithstanding its name, seems to be much larger than the Big Blue. We followed its general direction all day, mostly in sight of its timbered bottom, and encamped at the edge of the latter, which is said to be the last timber until we reach the mountains, and also the western limit for turkey, which cannot, or does not, exist far from timber.

May 27th, Sunday. We laid over in this delightful camp, all this lovely day, but I personally had an alarming adventure which came within a hair's breadth of ending my travels for good. During the last few days we have seen abundant signs of last year's buffalo, and know they cannot be far off, so this morning when those off duty commenced the usual holiday amusements of washing clothes, mending, bathing, turkey-hunting, and so forth, I determined to distinguish myself by finding first buffalo. Selfishly wishing to monopolize the honor, I quietly got my arms in order and mounting my horse, whose strength had been carefully spared and nursed for this purpose, away I started due north, loaded for buffalo and only buffalo. The day was lovely and the country charming, but for many miles I did not see a living thing

larger than a cowbird, except from time to time some distant antelope, which are innumerable and everywhere. The profound silence was almost oppressive, and unbroken solitude extended far as the eye could range over a continuous succession of green, rolling hills, rising cup-shaped from the traveler to the far horizon on every side. More than ever I was impressed with the grandeur and majesty of the boundless solitude, and my mind had come to be more occupied by such thoughts, than by the game I was looking for, when, having attained a distance of several miles from camp, I perceived afar off a column of dust ahead, that seemed much like signs of the desired buffalo. Fortunately, I had been impressed with the necessity of economizing my horse's powers for the expected run, so after another look at my arms, I trotted moderately forward, descending a long roll of the prairie, crossing the valley and ascending the next roll, from which the dust column seemed considerably nearer and distinctly approaching. As I watched it closely, considering through which depressions I could best make a hidden approach, I began to discern bright spots flashing from out the dust. This looked less like buffalo, and I was not very long in making out a large band of mounted Indians, with shining white shields and glistening lanceheads, coming directly toward me at a leisurely gait. Even then my stupidity was so inconceivable that I was completely taken in by their slow and careless advance and never once thought of Pawnees, taking the apparition for some hunting party of friendly Sioux or Pottawatomies, who are as hostile to Pawnees as we are. As I never before saw a large band of any Indians, I excuse myself for not knowing a war from a hunting or a traveling party, but as we have been constantly fearing Pawnees for a week past, cannot account for not suspecting them when actually before me.

I had a good horse under me and, as I supposed, an open road in the rear and did not feel at all alarmed, but on the other hand, I "had not lost any Indians," and had no use for such a large party so far from home, so when they had approached within half a mile or less, I waved my hand politely and turned to ride back, with the intention of regulating my speed by theirs, so as to avoid closer acquaintance. It was not a second too soon. In the very

act of turning, I caught sight of two small parties in my rear, galloping at full speed from either hand to cut off my retreat, and my discovery of them was saluted by a savage yell that burst from all three gangs when further concealment was useless. While the main body had continued to monopolize my attention by advancing slowly and conspicuously, the two detachments had taken advantage of the undulating nature of the ground to diverge, and by wide circuits attain my rear, I—greenhorn as I was—never thinking of such an ordinary stratagem, while stupidly gazing at the imposing and leisurely approach of the main body. I cannot deny that I was badly scared. The total surprise, the sudden dash from three directions, the consciousness of being outwitted, with the savage and exultant war whoops, as the warriors lay forward on their horses' necks and plied whip and spur for all they were worth, were all so alarming that I don't reproach myself for being badly rattled for a moment. It is a very different thing to face death with resolution calmly and leisurely matured, from seeing it spring suddenly upon one without a second of warning or reflection. One may need an instant or two to clinch the determination and close hard the teeth, without being a coward. At least, I hope so. Cold chills and profuse perspiration and quick breath all came at once, and yet I solemnly believe I am not a coward. There was, plainly enough, but one chance of escape. Both detachments were closing in to cut me off from camp, and the main body was charging down with whoops and yells doubtless counting me as good as bagged. I put spurs to my horse—which by the way, though Indian himself, was nearly as frightened as I was—and made a dash for the interval upon which the flanking parties were rapidly closing. Fortunately I had still rather the shortest distance and as it turned out, much the best horse. When I rushed between them, the yelling warriors were laying on with whip and heel, within a hundred yards on either hand, and commenced shooting arrows, all of which, as far as I know, fell short.

The flankers thus safely evaded, the affair settled down to a square race for the best horse and most careful rider, my lead being unpleasantly small for the distance before us. Though my

horse was the best, a good many contingencies may happen in seven or eight miles of strange country, and it remained to be seen how his bottom and endurance would compare with those of the hardy coursers of the plains. I gathered up my belongings and took my best position, well aware that a failure of even a misstep of my horse, meant death in a hopeless fight against numbers or torture at the stake. Though two or three guns were fired at this time, my hostile friends could not have possessed many, and hadn't time to take much aim. It was not long before they were stretched out in a long string, according to the speed of their several horses, the yelling subsided, and all parties settled down to steady work, the Indians beating their horses at every jump and evidently taking out all the run there was in them, while mine was at a good steady lope, but after the first burst, by no means at the top of his speed. I reckoned half the distance passed, and was descending at an easy gallop, a long and moderate inclination toward a level valley that spread out a couple of hundred yards wide to the base of the opposite rise. My pursuers were momentarily concealed behind the ridge just passed. I reached the foot of the hill at good speed, my horse sprang forward on what seemed firm ground, and plunged to the shoulders in a treacherous morass concealed by the long grass! A triumphant yell burst from the exultant warriors as they successively topped the ridge behind and came tearing down the hill. The swamp seemed to extend a long distance to right and left, and not being quite so scared as at first, I reflected that if I could once get my horse across, it must delay them as much as me.

Dismounting quickly, I led, pulled, and lifted with the utmost care, and was making good progress, when they began to fire a few shots from the hill, while the foremost horsemen abandoned their horses and tried to reach me on foot. But I was through the bog first, and while my horse recovered his breath, had a fine chance for pot shots with gun and both pistols at the foremost footmen struggling in the swamp. Then I had time to ride moderately up the hill while my friends were hauling their ponies through the mud, so that the distance between us was not much diminished, while my horse, though covered with mud and breath-

ing heavily, had been well studied and handled. I began to feel pretty safe if the course was only correct. From this hill I could make out the long, thin, blue line of timber on the Little Blue, but was very uncertain of the locality of the camp. Soon the foremost of the riders—widely scattered—began to appear at the brow of the last hill. I still had a good lead, but my horse trembled and breathed heavily and began to need the spur, while the gaunt ponies seemed no worse for all the running and beating they had had. As I neared the top of another hill, it was for me an anxious moment. If it failed to disclose some sign of camp, I might as well turn and make the best fight I could. Another bound and we were over, and flying down another long inclination which seemed to sweep away in gentle undulations to the line of timber, still a mile or two ahead. I strained my eyes from left to right along the base of the timber, and soon made out with increasing certainty far, far away, but right ahead, the white circle of wagon tops, apparently no bigger than prairie chickens, but which held all there was of hope, safety and life.

Now it was my turn to shout. One after another the baffled warriors came bounding over the ridge, pressing on with perseverance worthy of a better cause, but their practiced eyes no doubt recognized the wagons as soon as, or before, I did. Nevertheless, they chased me right up within gunshot of the camp, where all was confusion, some of the turkey hunters and fishermen being still absent. The mules were, however, quickly corralled, the wagon wheels and intervals manned, and the enemy, after prancing round at a safe distance with insulting gestures, rode off and soon disappeared in some inexplicable manner as though they had sunk into the ground. So sudden was their effacement when they got among the slight inequalities of surface at the edge of the bottom, that where and how they went, and even the direction, still remains a mystery. They may be hovering round tonight, for anything we know, and at any rate having now shown themselves, are pretty sure to make trouble for us at some bad crossing during the next few days. When the boys' siesta was broken up in such an exciting manner, everything about the camp was in confusion. The wagons were unloaded to air the contents, blankets and cloth-

ing hanging everywhere to dry, and men lying about, many of them asleep. But the gratifying speed with which the condition of affairs was changed, showed the stimulus of a charge of hostile Indians. The way the cargo was pitched into the wagons and under them, mules run in, corral chained up, rifles overhauled, and everyone in his place, was a marvel that one could hardly realize till it was done.

CHAPTER IV

DIARY OF JOURNEY CONTINUED

May 28th. Contrary to expectation, all passed quietly last night, and turning out early we 'caught up,' and leaving the Little Blue for the last time, struck out across a wide, low divide for the Platte, said to be twenty-five miles distant without water. Two mountain men coming from the west with several pack horse loads of peltry, joined us last night, having seen our fires. They were bound in for the settlements and seemed little concerned about the proximity of the Pawnees who hunted me yesterday, saying they were certain to go no further east, and had probably gone west to lay for us at some convenient opportunity. These men were without blankets, utensils or provisions, except saddle skins and a saddle of antelope, and said our coffee and bread were the first they had seen for many months. Notwithstanding this assumed indifference about the Indians, whom they pronounced a war party with designs either on an emigrant train, or on some Delaware or other friendly village south of us on the Kansas, they took care to start some hours before daylight and keep to the timbered river bottom. Our men do not think they really fear the Indians, as the mountain men have the credit of being on good terms with all the tribes, except a few hostile races like Blackfeet, while they hate emigrants as tending to embroil them with those they are nominally friendly with. Be that as it may, these would not admit any friendly relations with Pawnees, though inclined to be taciturn. With the exception of a few questions about the horses, arms and ornaments of the Indians, they scarcely uttered a word except in monosyllables, retired early to sleep, and were gone before daylight. This day's march, being on the divide between two large river systems, is more level

and the ground hard and good but ascending. Failing to make the whole distance we camped on high ground by a small pool of rain-water but without a stick of wood in sight. It was after dark or we could probably see the timber on the Platte. Coffee was made with wood and water brought with us from the Little Blue.

May 29th. Started early from the poor camp, and reached the big river by noon, winding down a narrow, crooked, precipitous ravine through lofty and barren bluffs to the river bottom, which on our side the river is about three miles wide, flat, and bare of anything but grass, which is good. We struck it opposite Grand Island which is several miles long, mostly covered by short, stunted and floodworn cottonwood of no use to us since we cannot get at it. The channel on our side is not much over a hundred yards wide, but that on the other side the island must be over a mile. The water is a rapid, rolling torrent with apparently more mud than water and not inviting to sight or taste. Though more cautious about hunting at a distance, this wide bottom is so flat that a dog could not hide on it, so I borrowed a horse—mine being bandaged and laid up—and rode out to the bluffs after antelope. I saw some single ones and one monstrosly large rabbit or hare but could not get a shot. I, however, saw an animal resembling a large shaggy dog, lying by a large stone near the bluff and rode within sixty yards before it got up. Its doggy appearance was so innocent that I hesitated to shoot till it moved to run. It then went off on three legs with an angry yelp, and I knew it from description for a grey wolf. Omitting to load up in compliance with the good old rule, I gave chase and had him cut off from the bluff, when he suddenly and savagely turned at bay, scaring my strange horse, which bolted and wheeled suddenly, almost throwing me. However, with the aid of spurs I got near enough to break the wolf's backbone with a single-barrelled pistol. As we had load enough in the wagons, I did not skin him, but contented myself with his fine brush.

Our camp is on the site of a former one, and close by are three freshly-made graves, showing that the cholera is ahead of as well as behind us.

May 30th. Adventures seem to be coming thick and fast. At half-past two this morning, in a heavy rain some new deviltry got into our infernal mules, and in an instant without any warning, the entire mulada—bell mare and all—broke and ran in a wild stampede. We were afraid to scatter off in small parties, but more than half the men took the trail, leaving the others to defend the camp. The mules struck the bluff at a bad point for ascending, and being very tired, slackened their gait and began to scatter. Several individuals were recovered in the canons of the bluff, but the main body, with the mare, were found fully twenty miles south on the high prairie, to which point they had run in their panic, and were now slowly returning for want of water. We cannot, therefore, charge our Pawnee friends with this mischief. The camp guard had unloaded all the wagons during our absence, throwing aside for abandonment every superfluous article, with the design of reducing our entire loads to 250 pounds per man to increase speed and save the stock. As bacon, therefore, was plentier than wood we made our fires from it tonight, trusting to a small reserve, with the expected buffalo, for meat. We did not spare it and are keeping up splendid fires, around which we are discussing what would have happened if the Pawnees had found the mules before we did, or had cut off some of our search parties, which were thinned out during the search so as to cover a front of several miles.

May 31st. Started early and plodded up the Platte bottom, enjoying the result of the reduced loads, but occasionally annoyed by the steep bed of some creek running down from the bluffs, every one of which must, of course, be crossed within a comparatively narrow space without affording much room for choice. The rain continues and is accompanied by a cold gale of wind. The road is soft and slippery, and sixteen miles were enough for us. That distance, however, cleared us of Grand Island, and gave us the whole width of the river to look at, but as it is the ugliest one I ever saw, the view is not an unmixed joy. It seems about a mile and a half wide, and thick enough with mud to cut into chunks. There is plenty of wood on the other side, out of reach, but not a stick as large as a walking cane on this side.

June 1st, thirtieth day out. We made twenty miles today over bad ground, but under a bright sky, which is an unaccustomed phenomenon for it seems to be always raining along here, and whenever the rain gives out, we are sure to have a hurricane to fill up the time. Wood is scarce, water is bad, and the grass though plenty in quantity, seems of a watery, unnourishing kind on which the stock is getting thin. Nevertheless, our course lies for some hundreds of miles up this river and its forks, and we must make the best of it, hoping it may improve towards its source. During the march, a well-mounted Indian man started out toward the bluff after a single antelope, and gave us a splendid view of a fine chase over the level bottom. The antelope strained every nerve to gain the bluff, but could not help stopping occasionally to gratify his curiosity. Owing to these delays and the well-chosen diagonals steered by the horseman, the antelope seemed several times cut off, but at last, becoming seriously alarmed, put forth his strength, leaving the horse with little difficulty, and disappeared among the deep winding ravines of the bluff. The chase occupied over half an hour, giving us all a fine, clear view of every move, and a more adequate conception of how and why this graceful animal has no equal in speed. His curiosity also was very amusing. Whenever the horseman, instead of going directly for him, steered a course to cut him off, the antelope immediately stopped and gazed with ears up, till the cutting off process seemed to strike his apprehension, when he would take a new course to be followed by a similar result. The hunter was completely deceived, and would not give it up, till the antelope disappeared altogether, when he came in with a knocked-up horse, which he will have the pleasure of nursing on foot for a week or two, as I am doing now. I have led my horse all the way from the Little Blue, and he is still not fit to ride if I am to have any buffalo-hunting out of him.

June 2nd. Made another march of twenty miles. Gambel being desirous of traveling more leisurely and comfortably, left us today and joined the large ox train led by Captain Boone of Kentucky, who is anxious to have him and will dispense with any aid from him in driving or working, in return for his medical serv-

ices. We gave him a mule with his proportion of the tools and provisions. He is an amiable, excellent fellow and very pleasant in conversation, having formerly made a similar journey to the Ratone Mountains and Santa Fé for the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, of which he is a prominent member. But he is averse to camp duty and hard work, and fond of taking things easy, and there is no doubt that Boone's large train with plenty of men and animals, and leisurely rate of traveling will suit him better than our headlong methods, especially as he has formed a warm friendship with Boone. (I never saw Gambel after that separation, and may as well state here what I did not learn till long afterward, and then only by hearsay. Boone's train after losing many teams and wagons in the Humboldt River desert, arrived late in the season at the Sierra, where they encountered more obstacles and losses, reaching California after the beginning of the rains. Gambel personally made his way as far as Rose's bar on Feather River, where he died almost immediately from typhoid fever resulting from the extreme privations suffered during the latter part of his journey. Either Boone himself or some of his party, among whom Gambel was a great favorite, were with him at the time of his death.)

The river and bottom continue to present the same appearance, which is so monotonous that if one were suddenly let down in it from above, he probably could not tell within hundreds of miles what part of the valley he was in. Antelope are plenty but troublesome to approach, in consequence of such entire want of shelter. The whole train had another superb view of a chase after a small band by two mounted men, the hunters trying to cut them off from the bluff; but when the antelope became really alarmed and put forth their speed, there was little real contest, as they can when they will run ten feet to one against grass-fed horses. I got one today by still-hunting, or stalking, but by a chance shot, much longer than could be counted on with certainty. We passed through a prairie-dog town several miles long, so undermined that we had some trouble in steering our wagons among their excavations. The animals though numerous, dodge down their holes so quickly that we only got about a dozen of the thousands in sight.

June 3rd, Sunday. The day was so fine we kept right on, and as there has been so much uncertainty in our estimates of distance, two of the boys measured the route with a four-rod line, and found we covered exactly eleven and a half miles by noon, which was an agreeable surprise to all. There are so few objects by which to estimate distance, that it is habitually underrated; several who have started after antelope supposed to be half a mile distant, have found them nearer four times that distance. As we start early and keep moving all day, we are satisfied by this test that we are averaging at least twenty miles daily.

June 4th. A long march covered today, which I personally at least, doubled in hunting. Results, one antelope attracted within a long shot by a rag on the end of a ramrod; one large grey wolf; one rattlesnake. Tom B. turned up some time after dark with the hind-quarters of a black-tailed deer, shot in the bluffs, the first we had ever seen. He says the bluff ravines and gorges are full of them. The road is now dry and good and game plenty, and if it were not for the want of wood and good water, we would not have much to wish for. There are lots of last year's "bois des vaches" or buffalo chips, which in the dearth of other fuel cause a keen and funny contention just before camping-time by the representatives of the several messes. No sooner is the harness off, than the whole bottom is covered with earnest searchers. It burns well when dry, but if damp or wet, it is smoky and almost fire-proof. As for water, the puddles of rain water are preferred to the river, which latter is also very inaccessible, owing to its under-washed and vertical banks. There has been a vast cloud of smoke in front all day, which is red and luminous tonight. We can't account for it by the burning qualities of the short green grass of the bottom, and suppose it is last year's grass on the high and dry prairie. Rolling off in vast volumes before a strong easterly wind the masses of fiery smoke make a magnificent and imposing display.

June 5th. Came up with and passed the fire, which is far off to the left of the river valley on the high plateau, doubtless fired by Indians. The sky is fine, but a howling easterly gale makes it necessary to secure the wagon tops with ropes round

the beds. Last year's buffalo skulls and bones are almost countless everywhere, and all eyes are on the watch for the living animal. Three lost hunters refuged with us tonight, having seen our fires from the bluff. They have been lost for three days from a train thought to be ahead of us, and have been rioting among buffalo in great droves. When camped last night twenty-five miles to the south, towards the head of the Republican River they were surprised by Indians, but had time to leap on their ready-saddled horses and escape, abandoning blankets, boots, and everything except arms. Today they have ridden all day through vast herds of buffalo moving to the northwest, which we should converge with in a few days. They owe their lives to these herds, which doubtless destroyed their trail and confused their pursuers. I spent today hunting black-tailed deer in the bluffs, and got a fine white-tailed doe, but not what I was hunting for. The bluffs average about three miles from our line of march, at which distance inequalities are softened and they seem merely a high range of hills. But when one gets fairly in them, they offer a great variety of wild and beautiful scenery, with plenty of fine clear rivulets and springs, and abundance of short timber, which rests the eye delightfully after the flat monotony of the grass plains. The rocky scarps and precipices are often really sublime; game various and abundant, and but for the haunting fear of Indians, and one's duties with the wagons, I would like to hunt there for a week. One cannot go amiss for deer, elk and antelope. The best plan is to climb cautiously up one of the knife-like ridges, keeping a lookout on the windward side for the beautiful little secluded dells with wood, water and grass, which are hidden among them. There is sure to be game in any of these glens, and it is easily shot from above. There are also some big bear tracks in those retired valleys which afford plenty of awkward places for meeting one unexpectedly, but Bruin himself has not yet appeared.

We camped above the Platte forks, and will try to cross the South Fork tomorrow, if we find a good place, though it looks quite like rain and high water tonight. One of the hunters brought in a young antelope, but as we have no way of taking care

of him, he was allowed to go, though he seemed so much inclined to stay with us that he had to be fairly driven away. Poor little fellow, if his mama doesn't find him, the wolves will.

June 6th. A rainy night, saturating the buffalo chips and making trouble in the housekeeping, but we have successfully put the great obstacle of the Platte behind us. Wagon-master Davis,⁷ having carefully reconnoitered and selected the best place—not without plenty of amateur advice—we geared up early and with care, blocked up wagon beds, and reached the ford by 8 A.M. While 'catching up,' four buffalo walked down out of the bluff, grazing leisurely along toward the river without paying the slightest attention to us and all the noise we were making. Four mounted men went for them, but they took to and crossed the river nearly at right angles, notwithstanding the powerful current. The river where we were to cross is pronounced over a mile wide, with a strong current quite red with mud. Nothing about its appearance was encouraging, and to plunge the wagons into it was a strong act of faith, as from its looks it might well be a hundred feet or any other depth. But it had to be crossed, and the mounted men scattered out with a wide front to feel the way, and plunged in, the wagons in a long line following close. The bottom was sandy and shifting, making constant motion necessary to prevent settling down in it, besides incessant attention to the team leaders which alarmed by the swirling current, rushing noise, unstable footing, and deep holes, were with difficulty prevented from being swung round and forced down stream. It was an exciting scene, the long train half submerged in the wide expanse of water, the splashing and floundering of the mules, the whoops and yells of the men, and the foam and roar of the dashing waters. Owing to various mishaps of wagons, mules and men, the crossing occupied three hours, and everybody being wet, cold and exhausted, we camped nearby in another tempest of wind and rain, to repair wagons and harness and dry and preserve the loading, two wagons having been upset in the river, besides numerous breakages of poles, hounds, etc. We were now between the two forks, at no great

⁷ Murdered by Mexicans in Calaveras County, California, about the year 1854.

distance from either, the place being not at all promising for game. But being in rollicking spirits over our success, as soon as the rain slacked, several of us started our hunting, but only obtained one very youthful antelope, which, had he been older, would have known better.

June 7th. Met numbers of Sioux this morning who though nearly naked, were well mounted, armed with long lances besides bows and arrows, and very friendly, owing partly perhaps to our strength and good order. Three of us started on horseback to visit their village, but when it came in sight, with the crowd about it, my companions thought better of the project and returned. But I had more faith in them, and being desirous of seeing their domestic arrangements at home, and seeing a lot of boys without arms coming to meet me, I kept on till I came among a lot of squaws digging roots, who screamed and broke for the town. As I did not want to have the appearance of chasing them, I waited till the unarmed boys and men came to meet me. The first fellow shook hands, and I handed him my lighted pipe, of which he took a whiff and politely returning it, invited me to proceed. I was conducted to a large tepee or lodge of nicely-tanned skins in front of which a few lances with shields suspended were stacked in tripod fashion. An old chief came out and by motions invited me to dismount and enter, but as half a dozen young fellows had hold of my gun which they were bent on examining, I was so busy holding on to it, with considerable friendly pulling on both sides, that I concluded not to dismount. Besides, the train was passing out of sight, evening was coming on, and I did not care to tempt them too much. Inside the tepee I could see two or three rather good-looking squaws sitting on buffalo robes, who would not have been there if any mischief was intended. Nevertheless, I did not wish to be too presuming on a first acquaintance, so when the chief at my request dispersed the crowd around me, I shook hands and took my leave, working my way through pretty much the entire male population, who were loudly discussing me or some other interesting object. The lodges were well laid out in lines, with lances and shields in front of each. A big lodge, colored red—perhaps a council house—occupied a prom-

inent place. No obstacle was offered to my departure and several half-grown lads, unarmed, jumped on horses and accompanied me half-way to our camp. There can be no doubt of the friendliness of these people, and that their excessive desire to examine my gun was mere honest curiosity. There are several tribes of this great Sioux nation, and without their aid in keeping off the Pawnees, Cheyennes and Arapahoes, no whites could get through this country without a big army.

June 8th. Large numbers of buffalo in sight on both sides of the river, on the north side in immense herds. S. J. and I were in some hilly ground a mile from the train, when three cows jumped out of the brush and ran for the river. I ran mine by a circuitous route as she doubled about for several miles, emptying gun and both pistols into her from within a few feet but she rushed down a high and nearly vertical bluff where I dared not risk my horse, and got clean away. J. had about the same luck and came back in a towering rage, swearing that lead would not kill them. The fact is, the old hunters say, you may fire lead into them all day unless you can hit a vital spot, which is not so very easy to do at top speed, over rough ground, with a chance of the ugly brute turning on one suddenly. We are following up the North Platte, which we must stick by for some 300 miles. There is little or no wood, and no water but the wretched stuff in the river, but the grass is plenty and good.

June 9th. Made a detour which occupied the entire day, returning to the river through a long, steep, winding ravine, called Ash Hollow, where we sudenly came upon B., who had been lost since we crossed the South Fork. He had walled up a lovely spring in the canon, had plenty of meat, and being certain we had not passed, was very contentedly waiting for us. Now we are anxious about the three men sent to look for him. This is a lovely place and a white trapper, with two or three Sioux lodges, evidently admires it as much as we, for they are camped at the foot of the hollow and revelling in variety as well as abundance. Nearly all sorts of game abound in the canons of the bluff, while the hunter's staff of life, buffalo, are grazing in all the open valleys in innumerable multitudes. On the north side they absolutely

crowd the bottom, down to the very river bank, and look across at us with such lazy and provoking indifference that B., H., and I were induced to try to cross the mile or more of river between us. But after steering a changing and zigzag course nearly across, we found an eighty-yard channel of deep water under the farther bank, with a current of not less than ten miles an hour. In trying to return, we had bad luck in finding the bars and shoal places, and were obliged to swim a dozen or more narrow but deep and rapid channels, and after spending several hours in the river, were glad to get out at all, wet, tired and shaking with cold.

June 10th, Sunday. Grass being poor, we moved on about twenty miles, passing the famous 'Castle Bluff.' Here the big river bluff has been hollowed out by the rains of centuries, into all manner of fantastic shapes, castles, cathedrals, forts, and structures of all sorts, the so-called 'castle' being the most remarkable.

June 11th. Twenty miles more covered today. Though the grass is quite poor, there is any quantity of buffalo, but no fuel except twisted grass—not even 'chips,' except the fresh ones that won't burn.

June 12th. Passed another curiously washed bluff called the 'Court House,' with a vast domed top and cupola. Also 'Chimney Rock,' another famous landmark, opposite which we are encamped at the estimated distance of half a mile, a guess which after walking to it and back, is unanimously increased to three miles. Distances are much underestimated on these wide level bottoms, and when hunting, it requires both experience and calculation to avoid shooting under. After constantly finding my bullets striking short, I now double the distance first estimated, and thus have better luck still-hunting than in shooting from horseback. One of our Indiana men had an adventure this morning. When harnessing up, about daylight, a solitary bull came down from the bluff and walked leisurely toward the river, passing by the camp within a few hundred yards. Two of the mounted guard having no work to do at the wagons, started after him and when within fair rifle shot, one dismounted and broke one of the bull's forelegs. Very much to the hunter's astonishment, the bull

instantly charged him on three legs, and as his horse promptly bolted and got away, it looked at first rather bad for the hunter. But his companion came to the rescue, the rest of the guard rushed out, and the bull was soon killed, though his meat proved tough and worthless. As all this occurred in everyone's sight, in fact almost in the camp, the Indiana hunter whose game turned the tables on him, will not soon hear the last of it.

June 13th. Chimney Rock is a large stratified mound of hard clay, about sixty feet in height and diameter, from the rounded top of which rises a chimney-shaped column, considered a hundred feet higher, tapering slightly toward the top. It is in sight far off over the plain before one can distinguish what it is, looking like the dead trunk of a gigantic tree, though in a country where to all appearance, no tree ever existed. From this point, S., J. and I, who have the best horses, left the train by general request to ride on to Fort Laramie, a Hudson Bay post near the mouth of Laramie's Fork, about seventy-five miles distant, to make arrangements to exchange wagons for more mules and pack saddles. We were all the afternoon sinking the conspicuous landmark of the Chimney, passing Scott's Bluff near evening, a place where some trappers, pressed by Indians, were once obliged to abandon to his fate, a wounded man of that name whom they were unable to carry with them. Rising here from the river valley over a high spur which intersected it, we simultaneously caught sight from the summit of an object new to both of us and pulled up in speechless admiration. Far away in front, in the ever widening west, its top gilded by the vanishing sun, was plainly distinguishable the white, snowy summits of Laramie's Peak of the Black Hills, distant, as we calculate, fully 100 miles or more.

June 14th. Slept with an Illinois train last night, and rode fifty miles today, not making out the snowy peak till nearly noon, since when we have scarcely removed our eyes from it. It is superb and grand, getting finer as we near it. We are hiding ourselves and horses tonight in a brush thicket without fire.

June 15th. Saw an occasional Indian—Cheyenne or Arapahoe—watching us from the distant hilltops, and one or two smoke columns, doubtless connected with their observations. So

we pushed on our tired horses hoping to put Laramie's Fork between us and those undesirable acquaintances, but on reaching it, found it swelled to a turbulent river, coming down from the mountains cold as ice and with a rushing current, the channel full of slippery, round boulders.

However, as the Indians had seen us, and the fort was in sight a few miles distant across the river, it had to be crossed. We both stripped for swimming, and securely fastened clothes and arms to the saddles, tying the ammunition on our heads. Selecting a favorable-looking rifle, we drew straws for the first essay, which, with my usual bad luck, fell to me. By this time, stripped as we were, we were in no fighting condition, and not a minute could be wasted. So I jumped my horse off the vertical bank, found swimming water almost immediately, and quartering down stream, made the opposite bank some 100 yards below. J. having a smaller horse, thought he could not make it, and tried a new place, which was worse, as the current rolled his horse over, forcing him to dismount and get dragged out a long distance below, by clinging for all he was worth to the horse's mane. As there was considerable brush on both banks, affording good shelter for Indians, we were not many minutes in shaking ourselves dry, pulling ourselves together and striking out for the fort. This is a good-sized square enclosure of whitewashed adobe, with projections for flank fire at two opposite angles. Two entrances on opposite sides, crowned with loop-holed gate-heads, give admission to the place, which is surrounded inside the walls by a range of small, square adobe apartments, used for storage, fur-pressing, and quarters for man and beast. It is a rough and primitive-looking place, but no doubt when well held, an effective stronghold against Indians, who visit it for trading purposes in large numbers at the proper season.

A large number of dilapidated wagons are standing about, abandoned by previous emigrants, and whatever their value at home, quite worthless here. Many have been broken up for material for pack saddles. The garrison now holding the place for the Fur Company consists of a 'clerk'—as its officers are modestly called—and six or eight others, all French or half-breeds. They must have horses or mules somewhere, but none are in sight and

they profess to have none, at all events, not for American emigrants. Our mission being therefore a failure, we lounged round the fort, looking at the trading and store rooms, fur presses and other arrangements novel to us, till near evening, when, being assured by the people that Indians would not molest us in sight of the fort, we moved three or four miles across the level plain to the Platte, where there was good grass, and had an opportune success in killing a young antelope, on which, with coffee made in a tin cup, we made a good supper and proceeded to enjoy a sound sleep, unmolested by guard duty, stampedes, or any of the usual bedevilments.

June 16th. A man and several head of stock were drowned last night from a large emigrant train, while crossing Laramie's Fork. Tonight our own train came rolling in with men and teams well battered by the forced marches they have been making. The Fork having gone down very much, all hands went right to work blocking up wagon beds, doubling teams, lashing fast cargoes, etc., and after some hard work, crossed everything without loss. Later, a U. S. Government train of one company of dragoons under Major Saunders, with wagons, stock and belongings, arrived and crossed, the stream having still further fallen. Their business is to take charge of the fort for a government post. This fine clear evening a long row of the lesser snow summits of the Laramie Range of the Black Hills became plainly visible, stretching in magnificent and splendid succession far away to right and left of our course. By sundown they had disappeared and we may not soon see them again, as they must be a long distance away.

June 17th. The stars and stripes went up on the fort this morning, receiving our hearty cheers. We moved but a short distance and camped, to rest the mules and consider what to do. Since we can get no more animals and there is no other inhabited place nearer than Fort Hall, on Snake River, many hundred miles distant, it is evident we must carry our wagons through, or do worse; so we conclude to nurse our failing teams and make the best of it. There is plenty of evidence of a great lightening of loads here by previous parties, and we still farther reduced

ours to the estimated weight of about 200 pounds per man. This work, with washing, mending, reloading and cooking for some days ahead, occupied all hands today, and tomorrow bright and early, away we go.

June 18th. At 4 A.M. we struck out into the Black Hills, leaving the river for a time. Laramie's Peak is in constant view ahead, about forty miles distant, though apparently not more than an hour's ride, so splendid and conspicuous is its white summit and so clear the atmosphere in this dry, elevated region. An Indiana wagon broke its pole this morning, but having a spare one along, a detachment of all the amateur mechanics was left with it, and it overtook the train in good shape at the noon halt, the fuel afforded by the broken pole having served to fit the irons on the new one. We passed a warm spring today, and the appearance of the country has much changed. The hills are higher, more rocky and abrupt, and the soil is dry, barren and stony, with little good grass at any one place. The wild sage or artemisia is getting more abundant, and buffalo much scarcer, though we can still get enough for our wants and even add to our stock of jerked meat. Some scattered pines in the rocky valley of a large creek made our hearts glad, it is so long since we have seen any. A large cottonwood on the same stream contains at least fifty Indian bodies, suspended with all their belongings in the branches, that being the fashionable mode of disposing of their dead with these tribes. The swinging about of the decaying remnants of these objects overhead, and the thick crop of fallen remains on the ground, makes this a weird and ghastly spot. Poor fellows! I suppose, after all, their object is about the same as ours, i.e., to get the perishing bodies out of the way, and launch the departed spirit toward the happy hunting grounds.

Their souls' proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way,
Yet simple Nature to their hope hath given
Beyond yon cloud capped hills an humbler heaven.

Among the other peculiarities of this region, the days are exceedingly hot, while the nights are frosty. The fact is, we have about

crossed the great Mississippi Valley, and judging from the rapid current of all the rivers, must have very much increased our altitude. We traveled all day without water, passing many large water courses entirely dry, and when tonight we struck a rapid creek of cold mountain water, it was almost impossible to keep the suffering mules out of it, and there was a terrible jam of teams and wagons. The banks on both sides were rough and high and it is hard to see how we got off with so little damage. We traveled several miles up this stream in search of grass, and camped.

June 19th. The whole landscape is now arid and barren and affords little or nothing that is familiar, the chief vegetation being sage, cactus, and yuccas of various kinds. Trees and shrubs do not exist, and grass is scarce and thin. The surface is decidedly mountainous, though known by the modest name of the 'Black Hills.' But it is very odd that both buffalo and antelope are more numerous on these barrens than on some of the much finer grass farther east. Four lone buffalo, apparently lost or confused, came down from a rocky ravine and crossed the trail between the wagons, which were well strung out in consequence of the rough road. Several of us who were mounted, after a short but breakneck gallop and wasting considerable ammunition, killed two. There must surely be some good grass valleys concealed among the hills, but as we get all the meat we want, close by, it is not worth while to look for them. Perhaps it is the Indians who have driven the game away from the better and more extensive pastures below. They even seem less wild here, and it is no trouble to get a forty or fifty yard shot on foot, and quite a matter of pride to kill with one bullet. This naturally causes a tendency to prevarication with our most truthful hunters, which it is hoped will disappear with the unusual temptation.

June 20th. Passed today several small cold-water streams, our course being parallel with, but several miles from, the Platte, now much reduced in width and improved in color, but more rapid than ever. Large or small bunches of buffalo are constantly in sight, and on surmounting a high divide with an extensive view, J. and myself, who were riding ahead, stopped in surprise

at seeing the country in the far distance apparently covered with timber, and it was only after close examination that we recognized the dark color prevailing over an area of many square miles, to be buffalo in countless masses. Some of our hunters saw large numbers of dead ones floating down the Platte, and it is hard to tell how these immense herds live on the thin and scattered grass. And yet though not fat they are in excellent condition. Passed today some wagons camped on the Rivière de la Bonté, whose cattle were stampeded last night in the bottom of that lovely stream, by a panther which jumped on and badly clawed one of the oxen. The cattle were recovered after a long chase, but were so scared that when yoked up, all the teams wanted to run away, and one upset the wagon and broke an axle, which they have stopped to repair. It seems that oxen are slower to take a bad fright than mules, but do not get over it so soon.

June 21st, fiftieth day out. Game is more abundant than ever. A small band of antelope galloped right through the train today, and did not seem much alarmed till after they had got by, when they kicked up their heels in astonishment at their own temerity. We came down out of the hills to the Platte, now closely confined by precipitous banks and much reduced in width, though deep, clear and rapid. It must soon be crossed, and fording is out of the question.

June 22nd. Overtook the Missouri train of 47 wagons and 200 men, guided by Hudspeth the famous mountain man, which left Independence several days before us. They are crossing on rafts of cottonwood and a kind of Noah's Ark—half raft, half scow. We camped nearby, and while engaged in cutting off the end of our heaviest wagon, and shortening the coupling, a large swan sailed down the river at steamboat speed, receiving a running fire from most of our fellows, with entire impunity. The balls struck and splashed all around him but he went tossing along on his way, unhurt. The Missouri pikers of Hudspeth's train, who shoot squirrels in the head with rifles, laughed loudly at our misses, but when their turn came, their shots were no better, and they now swear it was no swan at all but a "Rocky Mountain witch."

The soil has become so gravelly and gritty, that our bare-footed mules have worn their hoofs to the quick. Some we are shoeing, but the worst cases we are putting into buffalo hide moccasins, till they can bear shoes. It is fortunate we heeded the mountain men's advice in Independence, in providing shoes and nails, or we should now be in a fine mess. As with few exceptions, none of our mules were ever shod before, and as not one of us had ever shod one, our process of shoeing would probably astonish a blacksmith as much as it does the mules. It is counted cowardly to throw the animal, and the favorite method is to lash him up, head, body and legs, alongside a wagon. The tools are a drawing knife, with a sharp Bowie for the finer touches, a hatchet, and an axehead for clinching.

June 23rd. Commenced crossing at noon today, and finished after dark, without serious accident; then kindling a beacon for the mules, and starting them in a long distance above the coming-out place on the other side, we swam them all without loss, and sent them off, under guard, about three miles for grass.

June 24th, Sunday. Started early, followed the river about four miles over a bad hill and through heavy sand, and then bearing off through an easy depression to the right, we looked our last on the turbid and rushing Platte. We have followed it from near its mouth to this remote and solitary spot, where it is almost overhung by the stupendous snowy chain, in some of whose wild and unknown solitudes it has its birth. We are now passing over the high and considerable divide which separates it from the Sweetwater, which stream we shall follow to its source, and then look out for the Pacific waters. Here on these arid, rocky, sandy and barren expanses, we find numerous white alkaline deposits, the remnants of dried-up lakes and ponds. About twenty-two miles from the Platte, passing through a depression in a ridge of naked rocks, we picked up plenty of coal, lying on the surface, but had no time to look for the vein. There is no water on this divide, which is over forty miles across, consequently there is no game but a few antelope, which I doubt not can travel 100 miles for a drink. One followed us for several miles, keeping a parallel course alongside, a few hundred yards distant. The men say it is from curiosity,

but I don't wonder at his wanting company in this arid desert. Not knowing we were to find no wood nor water, we brought neither, and had to camp without, after a sixteen-hours' march. There was considerable language used, but so far as I could ascertain, none of it consisted exclusively of hymns.

June 25th. Disconsolately we caught up at daylight, and proceeded, the mules bawling pitifully for water. About ten, we got the customary water signal from a man sent off to examine a greenish spot at a distance. We found the green tint to be due to an extensive patch of dwarf willow scrub, among which was some scarce and bad water. However, both mules and men were about this time willing to drink "anything that will run." After passing numerous bare rocky ridges, we camped within sight of the Sweetwater, the guard taking the mules down into its bottom, which though pretty sterile, has very fair grass on the immediate banks.

June 26th. Daylight revealed 'Independence Rock' within a short distance. It is a rectangular mass of bare rock about 600 by 300 feet, and perhaps sixty feet high, hard to climb but accessible in some places. The repeated echoes and reverberations from the neighboring mountains, of my pistol fired on the summit, were grand and imposing. Five miles above it, is a celebrated place known to mountain men as 'Devil's Gate,' a wonderful chasm yawning deep and dark between vertical or overhanging walls of rock many hundred feet deep and but a few feet across at the surface. The eye is lost in the black depths except only for the white ribbon discernible far down, apparently in the very bowels of the earth, but the abyss is so deep that not a sound comes up from the tossing white ribbon, which is the Sweetwater. Entangled and hanging on a sharp ledge fifty feet below the opposite edge, lay the dried carcass of a bighorn which from some cause or other, had failed to make his jump. This chasm is truly a wonderful place. Being entirely of naked rock, it is simply an earthquake split or cleft, carrying about the same width from top to bottom, suggesting no idea of its having been gradually cut out by water, as is plainly the case with most cañons.

This river heads in the Wind River Range not far from the top of the 'South Pass.' It is bright, clear and cold, and full of salmon trout. The valley is generally two or three miles wide with plenty of small side streams and good grass. The main range of the Rocky Mountains rises on each side to snow peaks, stretching away north and south in endless succession, spotless and shining in virgin white, seen by few and trodden by none. A sharp thunderstorm toward evening produced results unspeakably grand and awful. The black clouds hovered below and in strong contrast with the white shining summits, and their detonations were so confused with reverberations that one only perceived a continuous roar in which reports and echoes were indistinguishable. I think the dullest minds took in some new impressions of power and grandeur.

June 27th. Passed today what looked like an immense frozen lake, but was pure, spotless saleratus, deposited in considerable thickness by dried-up waters. Though we are getting farther into the heart of the mountains, the valley widens rather than narrows. Water, grass and antelope are plenty, but no wood. The variations of day and night temperature are excessive. The sand gets heated by the sun to a temperature which the bare hand can hardly endure, while ice forms in the camp kettles every night, though in this northern latitude daylight lasts till 9 P.M.

June 28th. Trying to make a 'cut-off' today, we got the train involved in a bad cañon and had to cross the river three times in as many hundred yards. The crossings were bad and dangerous for wagons—especially the last—where the current and deepest channel were immediately under the near bank, and notwithstanding the many tons of rock thrown in to level up, the mules were swimming from the start, the wagons taking a headlong plunge after them. On the opposite bank the teams were hauled out with ropes, the leaders soon getting footing enough to help yank out the rest. When the mules were swum back to double teams, they had to be hauled by main force up the nearly vertical, rocky bank, with ropes passing over extemporized shears. But no pen, pencil or tongue can adequately describe the splendor of the

scene from the camp, which was made immediately after the last crossing. The rude amphitheatre was closely hemmed in by vertical walls of split and shivered rock, the floor was covered with the finest grass, the dashing river made continuous music, the last rays of the sun peeped in through cracks of the western wall, and on every side, far above and beyond the immediate rocky boundary, towered the superb Wind River peaks, shining white and pink from top to bottom with snows that never melt. It is the unanimous voice that all our tribulations to this time are amply compensated by this single view. Even this secluded mountain glen is penetrated by antelope, who if not overcome like ourselves by the scenery, are at least very tame, and are to be seen all round, watching us from the near foothills. A considerable bunch of bighorn, including some young ones, also came down and watched us with intense interest for a long time from a rocky and inaccessible though not distant ridge, and not liking our looks, went off at last slowly and with seeming reluctance. All the sentimental theory freely indulged in about their apparent wish for our company and closer acquaintance, was cut short off by B., who after listening to it awhile, remarked, "Boys, I wouldn't gush any more about them bighorn; what's the matter is, they're too bashful to come right into camp, and there's no other place round here where they can get water handy."

June 29th. This morning's march was over sensibly rougher ground, but every step disclosed new and different views of the great ranges of snow-peaks now on every side of us. At noon we sewed together some wagon covers and dragged a river pool about five feet deep for salmon trout. Probably no such net was ever used before, but we had plenty of men for dragging, as well as to form wing or guiding weirs. The river was full of fish and with any proper net we could have had a wagon-load, but the net, being so impervious, could not be quickly handled and the slow process of hauling in the entire river gave the fish a chance to dart between our legs, and we only caught a few. Snow is now abundant even along the trail and at the noon halt we found a green, grassy valley of 100 acres or more, entirely underlaid with hard crystal ice, lying but a few inches below the grass. We dug four feet

into it at one place without finding the end of it. Though clear and transparent to the eye, it had a decidedly sulphurous smell and taste.

June 30th. Ice froze two inches thick in the camp kettles during the night, and at daybreak the ground was hard frozen but soon thawed as the sun rose. A train of forty-two wagons with forty men of Colonel Loring's rifle regiment passed us today, being what is left of three companies, the rest of whom have died or deserted. They are on the way to receive possession of Fort Hall, another H. B. Company post on Snake River of the Columbia. The major commanding (Sanderson, it is said) has two daughters along, a sort of ornament rarer than beaver or big-horn in these parts. On this day, memorable in our journey, we crossed the continental back-bone divide, and are now on the down-grade for the Pacific. Having followed the Sweetwater for 120 miles and crossed it eleven times, we left it at nine this morning, and after taking a last look at the Atlantic waters, began a steady though easy ascent, which by noon brought us to the highest part of the pass. The precise summit is not easy to identify. It lies somewhere on a high, arid, barren expanse nearly level, and furnishing a better road than we have seen for hundreds of miles. We, however, fixed upon a spot lying between two conical hills on the right, and had the satisfaction of halting to rest a short time on the summit of the continent, the view from which, however, is not nearly as fine as many we have seen, a large part of the snowy range being here obstructed by rocky foothills clear of snow. With three cheers and several more, we rolled on downward toward the setting sun, not forgetting to carry a little water destined by nature for the Atlantic, to be poured into the first west-flowing water for transfer to the western ocean. This is Pacific Spring, which gives rise to a small rivulet that by way of the Little and Big Sandys, Green River and the Colorado, ultimately reaches the Gulf of California. How near together the solitary mountain sources of these little streams, and yet with half the world between them, how widely severed their ultimate destinations!

CHAPTER V

DIARY OF JOURNEY CONCLUDED

July 1st, Sunday, sixtieth day out. In a joyous mood at having placed the great continental divide behind us, we pushed on twenty-two miles over a sterile country to camp on the Little Sandy, where fuel, grass, antelope and everything but water is scarce.

July 2nd. Made only six miles to Big Sandy, a fine swift-flowing creek, fifty yards wide and up to the wagon beds, with a good smooth bottom. We camped here to rest the stock and prepare to cross the "*Jornada del Muerte*," a waterless desert extending fifty miles or more to the Green River of the Colorado. Repacked wagons, filled every vessel that would hold water, and overhauled the mules' shoes and harness.

July 3d. Rolled out on the desert at 3 P.M. yesterday. Road of hard sand, level and good but barren as a brick yard. At sunset the vastness, solitude and desolation were most impressive. No living thing, animal or vegetable, scarcely even a roll or inequality of surface, relieved the monotony of this wide flat desert perched almost on the top of the mountains. Far in the rear, beyond the dreary waste, the distant snowy summits were still visible when night came down. At ten we halted a few minutes to wet the mules' mouths and our own, and then resumed the lonely and depressing march. The night was bitterly cold, and all were glad to walk who could. Daylight disclosed the same cheerless landscape, the snowy summits, the only landmark, apparently not far distant behind. Halted half an hour at daybreak and then pressed on, the ground, dry as it was, being hard frozen. Soon another snowy range became gradually visible ahead, being that of the high mountains beyond Green River, a spur of the Wahsatch, I suppose. From our

intermediate position on the wide level desert between, these two massive and snow-capped ramparts took on an additional and imposing grandeur. At 3 P.M. we commenced winding down a steep and rocky ravine through lofty river bluffs, frequently having to lower the wagons with ropes, and by 5 P.M. stood on the banks of the Green River of the Colorado, after twenty-six consecutive hours of marching, looking up with awe and wonder at the lofty and apparently inaccessible bluffs through which we had nevertheless just descended. There was no grass near, on our side of the river, and while the guard went off with the mules, we commenced unloading wagons and caulking the beds, fastening these together in couples. Some stunted cottonwood from which to make oars, was found a few miles down the river, and by night the preparations were nearly ready for a hard day's work tomorrow. The river is wide and deep, with a rushing current and icy cold.

July 4th. This is a holiday, but not for us. For myself, I stood guard all last night except two hours, which last supplied all the sleep I have had in fifty hours. At daylight the ice in the kettles was an inch thick and the ground white with heavy frost. After much contention with the mules, who objected to take water, we got them huddled together on the bank with a rope drawn round them and so forced them in. But they no sooner struck the main current, than most, including the bell mare, were rolled over, got their ears filled, and came back in spite of us. The others got on the other shore, strung out for a mile or two down stream. A second lot crossed with difficulty in the same way, but as this would soon exhaust the returning mules as well as ourselves, Chamberry stripped, put the bell on his own neck, and undertook to swim over on the mare. He is a fine horseman and a good swimmer and did very well as far as mid-river, when the powerful current rolled the mare over, and the frightened mules commenced piling on him. For a time it looked as though it were all over with C. who, dressed only in a cow bell and a pair of spurs, was beyond reach of help in the midst of an icy current of fifteen miles an hour, with a hundred terrified mules crowding over and around him.

But C. was equal to the occasion. Turning over on his back he kicked the water into their faces till he got some room, and then seizing the mare's tail, he guided her quartering down stream ahead of the crowd, and got her safely landed about three miles below. Three mules and two horses were drowned, and seven landed on an island, while one horse got footing several miles below, under an overhanging bluff, on the side he started from. At last, however, all the survivors were got across and we all went to work on the wagons transformed into boats. A number of men crossed first with some harness, not forgetting the clothes of C., who was jumping about in a lively and entertaining manner, to avoid freezing. A team of mules on the other side, and of men on our side, was soon rigged, and thus when the loaded and returning boats, after being carried far down by the current, got within casting distance, they were quickly towed up again abreast of the starting point. The wagon beds being well dried, mostly held the caulking well, and with frequent bailing, answered the purpose. By 9 P.M. everything was across, and the most difficult obstacle yet encountered, was behind us.

July 5th. The mules had a day's rest, today. In the evening two mountain men, east-bound, came in from Salt Lake, where the Mormons, driven out by mobs from Missouri and Illinois, are now settling. They give fine accounts of that vicinity, but say we cannot get our wagons to California on account of the entire absence of grass this season on the Humboldt, where an unmitigated desert impassable for stock, now stretches for 250 miles. *Nous verrons.*

July 7th. Made eighteen miles yesterday, and the same today, over a rough country, from which large game is absent, but there are plenty of a kind of large hawk which are fair eating, and also, in the sage brush, large numbers of a small brown ground-squirrel, and some grey grouse called by the trappers, "cock of the plains." Water and grass in the bottoms, but high grounds dry and sterile. Snow is in sight on all hilltops, and the snow-capped chain of the Bear River Mountains in full view ahead. During several hours, today, the ground was so completely

covered with vast multitudes of large black wingless crickets, that the wagon wheels left long black streaks behind them.

July 8th, Sunday. Crossed and left Ham's Fork of Bear River, today, and are now within the great central basin of the continent, on waters which reach no ocean, but drain into the Great Salt Lake. After crossing the river it required the whole morning to ascend a long, rough and difficult mountain, but from the bleak and rugged summit a superb and majestic view unfolded itself in front, though winter howled around us. Fields of snow lay far below, every ravine and gorge being piled full. One hundred and fifty miles to the east, beyond the barren rocky waste we have been traversing, rose the Main or Wind River Range still dominating everything in that direction in distant but undiminished grandeur. To the south was the massive snow-covered chain of the Wahsatch, and in front stretched an endless series of rough hills, the hollows and intervals mostly filled with dark forests of the fir which at home is called "Balm of Gilead," whose dark masses appear by contrast quite black. We camped by the edge of such a forest which was entirely impenetrable, the trees branching to the ground and the interstices filled six-feet deep with old snow. Here we enjoyed an unaccustomed luxury in the shape of bounteous log fires. The "cock of the plains," sage hen, or grouse, as it is variously called, having been abundant all day, everyone had as much as he could eat, an agreeable variety from bacon and jerked buffalo beef. The mules soon filled themselves with grass, growing around the edge of the timber, and collected in a dense mass round our fires, whether for warmth or from love of our society, we cannot tell.

July 9th. Leaving our delightful but rather wintry camp, we traversed an elevated and very rough country, crossed the high divide by noon, and descended a long, difficult, and, for the wagons, dangerous mountain to Bear River, flowing through a fertile and delightful valley.

July 10th. A village of Snakes, or Shoshonees, came down out of the mountains and camped close by us, after we turned in last night. Soon after, the mules, now usually quiet enough,

stampeded with a wild rush and stopped at the foot of a high inaccessible bluff, several miles distant. Of course we were up all night, not knowing whether the Indians or only the wolves, caused the stampede. The former profess to be friendly, but our men are suspicious and keep them out of camp, which makes them inclined to be quarrelsome, and as we have plenty of hot tempers among ourselves, several altercations have occurred, and been fairly patched up.

July 11th. No attack last night, but a squally time this morning. Just as the train rolled out after daylight, one of the guard shot what he took for a wolf partly concealed in the brush, but which turned out to be a Shoshonee dog. Out rushed the Indians, forming in battle array as they advanced. We had just time to run the wagons into corral, when 150 of the Indians were in line, bawling for vengeance at the top of their voices, with bows bent and arrows drawn to the head. We had about sixty rifles in line, ready and extremely willing, but two chiefs advanced unarmed, with hands held up, and negotiations were commenced which resulted in our paying an old blanket for the dog, they agreeing to move off first, and not follow us. We made a few miles, but seeing many small parties of Indians watching from the hills, and finding a good defensive position, encamped early.

July 22d, Sunday. From the camp on the 12th, five of us with a few pounds of flour each, left the train and rode southwards to visit the Great Salt Lake. Here on this great inland ocean—across which no land can be seen—were encamped many Mormon wagons, the people being about to form a permanent settlement in this rather uninviting place. There is good timber, however, in the hills, and running water, which can be easily conducted through the valley. The soil in the valley seems good, but the hills are arid, rocky and barren. I should think they might have found better places for settlement, but perhaps none more secluded, and seclusion seems to be what they principally want. After remaining one day at Salt Lake we started north with the intention of overtaking the train either at Soda Springs, or between there and Fort Hall, by successfully dodging the Shoshonees. But as bad luck would have it, the very night we started,

I was attacked with headache and the symptoms of a severe bilious attack, which riding by night and hiding in the brush by day, with slim diet and only a saddle blanket for covering, did not tend to alleviate. The suffering was so intense that for some days I was semi-delirious and pretty much indifferent to life. But fifty miles a day must be covered, to overtake the train, even if any single individual had to be abandoned, and in some way or other—I am sure I can't tell how—my comrades succeeded in dragging me along. We passed the great natural curiosities of the Soda and Steamboat Springs, finding a note from our train at the former, and about the 19th, found the wagons camped on Snake River, marked on the maps as Lewis' Fork of the Columbia, a lovely stream with clear, bright, cold water and a rapid current.

On the 20th Fort Hall hove in sight across the level river bottom and once more our hearts were gladdened by the sight of a roof. The fort is a concentrating post of the ubiquitous H. B. Company, receiving furs every spring from the wandering trappers who then come in from their winter resorts in the mountains, and also from the smaller posts scattered at wide distances through the adjacent mountains, dispatching its accumulations annually, to Fort Vancouver, a thousand miles distant. The dragoon train has not arrived yet, but is daily expected. The enclosure and buildings are larger but precisely similar to those at Fort Laramie, with the agreeable addition of a delightful location on the bank of this lovely mountain river. It seems necessary to get outside of the Mississippi valley, on one side or the other, to find clear, cold, sparkling streams, those of the great valley being muddy, dirty, and unattractive. Below the fort on the main river, there are considerable falls and rapids, but whether rolling green, clear and deep between rocky banks, or foaming white over black basaltic rocks, it is everywhere beautiful and refreshing to those who have become accustomed to the muddy and unlovely streams of the prairies. But there seem to be few attractions without drawbacks, and here these are the mosquitoes, which swarm in clouds at evening. Fortunately their industry is necessarily confined to the period of an hour or two after the great heat

of the mid-day sun, and before the nightly frost which rarely fails to follow later, but their numbers and activity during that time are beyond all former experience. One can hardly open one's mouth to eat or speak without trapping several. The mules huddle together in a close crowd with tails waving overhead, and probably agree with us that even the extreme heat of the sun is easier to bear than the ceaseless persecution of these marauders, who have to get plunder enough in an hour or two to last them during the rest of the twenty-four.

July 26th, eighty-fifth day out. Descending Snake River some miles, before reaching the mouth of Goose Creek, a tributary from the south, we made a cut-off to strike the latter higher up, and then ascended it steadily to its source, and are crossing the high, dry divide which separates its drainage system from that of the Mary's, or Humboldt, some of whose waters we should reach soon. F. C. died on the night of the 24th, and was buried while darkness still shrouded the operation, in a rocky cleft of the Goose Creek bluffs, which was afterward filled with the largest stones we could move. Today we passed a group of boiling springs emitting clouds of steam visible at a long distance, both ground and water of bright scarlet color, attributed to iodine or cinnabar, or both. On the divide the country is an arid desert from which the train raises clouds of dust indicating by a motionless canopy our recent course for miles.

July 27th. Though the snowy masses of the Humboldt Mountains glisten within a few miles on either hand, the day's journey has been hot, dusty and waterless. Near noon, several springs or wells of clear, but badly impregnated water were found, the water being several feet below the surface, and the bottom so deep as to be invisible. Guards had to keep the thirsty mules from pushing each other in, while we hoisted water out for them.

July 28th. Struck and crossed what is taken for a fork of Humboldt, upsetting and damaging one of the best wagons, which, however, was soon patched up.

July 29th. Having discussed for some days the policy of dividing our large train, it was resolved upon and executed today. The reasons were: first, the difficulty of finding grass for so many

mules together; second, our diminishing provisions. Our company having sacrificed more of our lading at various points, our teams are now able to travel faster, and the necessity for it becomes daily more apparent, as we have barely a month's provisions left, while the Indiana wagons have twice as much, besides other comforts which we long since abandoned. It is true the Indians here are hostile, but only in a sneaking way, such as hiding among the sage brush and shooting arrows at the men and mules at night. But they seem such poor devils that they inspire little fear and if they should want to fight, we had rather take the chance of handling them by ourselves, than exhaust our provisions before getting over the Sierra. So at or before daylight, our three remaining Georgia wagons pulled out of the corral alone, the "Old Dominion" declining to join us. No one liked the separation from our old companions, though believing it safest and best, all things considered. Relieved from the long dusty train, our three light wagons covered thirty miles before night, and camped by a big ox train which was attacked last night by "Diggers." They had most of their cattle run off by the Indians into the mountains, whither most of the men, reinforced by some friendly "Snakes," had gone to try and recover them. Our own little party is now equally divided, one half standing guard half of each night, which is not a nice amusement after a hard day's work.

July 30th. At daylight, though there had been no special alarm during the night, and the mules were all right, H. of the night guard, was found dead and cold with several arrows sticking in him. He had evidently been still-hunted, his gun being undischarged, and as his body was otherwise undisturbed, the marauders were plainly reserving that pleasure till we should roll on and leave the coast clear. To frustrate such designs, the body was buried in the corral, and the mules herded over it for an hour, to destroy the traces. We made a long march, crossing and leaving the river which here flows through an impassable cañon, our route winding among rocky hills and gorges, with a prospecting party ahead. Late at night again we struck the bottom and rushed for the water, which shows a constant deterioration both in quality and temperature. Nevertheless we supped on trout, duck, and

sand-hill crane, all boiled together in the camp kettle, the culinary professors valuing their repose much more than their professional reputation. We purchased today from some Shoshonees, a lot of finely dressed deer skins for an equal number of charges of powder and lead, and all hands are busy tonight making trousers to replace our old rags.

July 31st. Thick ice is in the camp kettles this morning, notwithstanding the intense heat of this cañon by day. We again had to leave the river, the only cheerful object in the landscape, on account of its narrow cañons, debouching' again upon it late tonight. The road through the cheerless rocky gorges was dismally depressing, though the desert par excellence, is still many miles ahead.

August 1st. Except some bad muddy sloughs to be crossed, the road today was quite fair. The river, though without tributaries, varies little in dimensions, but the water is nastier and warmer every day. It is too deep to wade, with little current, keeping mostly near the center of its valley, which varies from two to five miles in width, bounded by rocky, dismal and barren hills, without vegetation. The immediate banks are often underwashed and vertical, almost everywhere inaccessible for stock without assistance.

August 2nd. The water gets still worse and more impregnated with mineral. Grass has nearly disappeared, being only found in small patches in the river bends, where it has to be diligently searched for by advance parties. The mules look badly, some of them showing signs of failure. While looking for grass ahead of the wagons, tonight, three of us flushed, rode down, and caught a Digger. He was short, stout and naked except for a small grass bonnet on his ugly head. He had secreted his arms, if he had any, and displayed in a split stick a small eel, doubtless reserved for a family feast. As the miserable wretch stood with lariat round his neck, rolling his longing eyes from us to the free but distant hills, it seemed hard to take his worthless and joyless life, notwithstanding his undoubted proclivity for potting men and mules in the darkness. Yet one man voted for his death, and when outvoted, insisted that he should be "tied up and

whipped a little, anyhow." I am happy to say his philanthropic view was not allowed to prevail. When released, the rogue walked off slowly—though doubtless momentarily expecting a shot in the rear—for a few yards, when he suddenly disappeared among the sandy ripples of the desert as though the earth had swallowed him.

This afternoon as I was climbing a stony hill in search of sage-hens for the pot, the boys down in the camp yelled and pointed beyond me with excited gestures, but not distinguishing their words, I only thought of Diggers. As the hillside was perfectly bare and open, without much chance of an ambush, I kept on upward, when suddenly from behind a small red boulder, not as big as a wheelbarrow, out skipped a fine sleek panther not twenty yards distant. Having a stern shot, I hit him as he ran, pretty badly I think, upon which he turned and snarled for an instant as I was hastily reloading and then ran the faster. Not being willing to go out of sight of the wagons, I therefore lost him, but must say I should have given him credit for making a better fight.

August 3rd. Passed a train today, whose mules were run off by the Diggers, after they had killed two of the guard. Most of the men have gone after the mules in a desperate hope of recovering them, for life itself here depends on the all-important help of that indispensable but hated animal. All our men are savage by sympathy, and it is lucky for our yesterday's captive that he was not caught today.

The only grass—such as it is—being on the other side of the river, we had to swim the mules over tonight, with some extra care for them and ourselves, as the Diggers have a way of hiding in the low sage and willow scrub along the river, and taking their chance of potting a mule or a guard, whom they can afterwards utilize at their leisure.

August 5th, Sunday. Yesterday and today, the same monotonous plod down the river, water and grass constantly getting scarcer and worse. There is no wood except some short trifling willow brush, and as that is infested with Diggers, whose deadly arrows make no noise and give no alarm, it is as much as one's life is worth to step into it alone. The heat is intense, the bottom

is becoming deep and sandy, and everything indicates the vicinity of the "jumping off place."

August 6th. The guard ran the mules in before daylight this morning, shouting "Diggers," when up came everyone to a rally at the wagons. As soon as the mules were in, Seab Jones ran forward, shouting, "Forward boys, spread out wide and charge 'em. Don't let the d—d rascals think we have to fight behind wagons." About this time a gun on our side was discharged, but not much attention was paid to it, as all hands charged into the brush after S. The Diggers ran, affording a glimpse only of two or three, who were fired at, but so far as we know, none were bagged. But a sad sight awaited us on returning to the wagons. The dead body of P. lay on the ground, his discharged gun beside him. The gun had been hanging in the wagon and in pulling it out hastily, muzzle foremost, it had been discharged, the bullet passing through his heart. P. had been liked by all. He was a good worker and an excellent driver, never backward in doing his full share. Under the circumstances it was perhaps best for all that he had been killed outright, rather than wounded. There was nothing to be done now but to wait for daylight by which to bury him, which we did with sadness and sorrow, and travelled on as we could not afford to lose any time. The mules are evidently failing. On a cut-off of fourteen miles without water, today, one dropped in harness. Another was substituted and the wagons passed on, but the defunct being lifted up, revived, and followed the train. Many whirling dust columns were seen today, probably caused by air currents coming out of the gorges and meeting others on the plain. The mirage also now begins to be seen, and as in these dry deserts the thoughts of all run constantly on water, these usually take the form of beautiful blue lakes with waving trees; one even distinguishes a lovely ripple on the water, and white foam along the shore, where, alas, all is dreary barren sand. Tonight two men stopped with us, of the party who went after the stock stolen by the Diggers on the 3d. They became separated from their party far among the desert mountains of the north, where they came on a mounted Indian concealing himself among rocks. They ran him several miles

through cañons and gorges, and over precipices, thinking he would make for the locality of the lost stock. He gained on them, however, sufficiently to light a signal fire, shortly after which they saw a dozen more stealing upon them through the rocks. It was now their turn to run, and though chased till night, they escaped. To-day they surprised a single redskin on foot, who, being cornered and either misunderstanding or refusing all terms, attacked them boldly with bow and arrows, but was of course killed.

August 7th. Grass seems now to have disappeared; stunted willow brush and some water rushes constitute the only mule food tonight, except a few bundles brought along with us from a small patch discovered across the river this morning, which we cut with our knives, after swimming the river. It may at least serve as sauce for the willows.

August 9th. We are now traveling mostly by night, lying by during the day, partly by reason of the intense heat, and partly because it is easier to guard the mules from the Diggers, during daylight. The mirage is visible daily, and knowing its falseness, it is only tiresome and tantalizing. But then as one of the fellows awfully suggests, "Boys you are getting to know too much. Perhaps one of those we passed today was a real lake." This thought, though indignantly repelled, rankles! Tonight we have reached several thousand acres of meadow lying adjacent to the large but shallow pond known as the "Sink of the Humboldt." Here this river which we have followed for some 300 miles, sinks into the ground, and an absolute desert, said to be 80 miles across without grass or water, extends to the Salmon Trout or Truckee River, coming down from the Sierra Nevada and also disappearing in this great desert by a sink of its own. This desert cannot be avoided. It must be crossed, and our mules are in poor condition for it, having had little nourishing food for the last 300 miles.

August 10th. We employed today cutting and curing grass, which, though coarse, is all the fodder there is. The mules had a fine rest and filled themselves well with tough grass and water, as well they may, for some, at least, will never see any more. Three Piutes, one of whom spoke some Spanish, came into camp tonight, pretty well used up, having just crossed the desert. They

give joyful accounts of the gold diggings, but terrible stories of the desert ahead, where they say numerous wagons are left standing, abandoned by preceding trains. They also say that a fair trail is marked out by dead stock. They however told us of some boiling springs, which if we can find, may be very useful.

August 13th. During the last three eventful days we have successfully passed the most dreaded barrier between the two oceans, the Great Desert. On the 10th we carefully repaired and readjusted everything, filled all the water vessels, filled up wagons with dried grass, and at 3 P.M. rolled out into the waste. After leaving the grass and rushes at the Sink, nothing but bare, arid, sandy desert meets the eye as far as it can range. At first a few stunted sage-brushes relieve somewhat the bare expanse, but even they soon disappear, after which the only unusual objects are the occasional white patches of alkali. We cleared the Sink before dark, and got rid of its nasty, fetid exhalations, having traced the Humboldt from its mountain sources through 300 miles of desert only made passable by its stream, to its ignominious end, where the desert finally overcomes and destroys it. The Sink is a pond several hundred yards in diameter with stagnant surface looking as if it had received several coats of lead-colored paint, and with indefinite, shallow, marshy borders, where the water eternally contends for existence with the enveloping sand. No living thing is visible about or near it, except some coarse grass and a few rushes in the shallows.

As night shut down on the cheerless waste, even the mules became depressed and bellowed mournfully along the line. The sand, however, was at first hard, making a good smooth road. At twelve the moon rose in a huge distorted pyramidal shape of greenish red hue, but gradually recovered its proper form and color, and became a cheering aid to our forlorn march. We had determined to halt half an hour every four hours, to rest the mules, wet their mouths, and grease the wheels when necessary. The 12th was intensely hot, with whirling dust columns careering over the desert and with an occasional bed of loose and difficult sand, but at 3 P.M., guided by columns of steam, we found the boiling springs, a curious place where the ground seems hollow under a

large space supplying numerous springs, varying from a minute jet of steam to a mass of violently boiling water several yards across. The crust seemed cracked and dangerous, especially as the mules were so crazy to reach the water that one got quite badly scalded. To cool the water, we dug a long ditch, but a bare taste was enough for most. When disguised with coffee we managed to swallow some, and my horse drank a little of the coffee, though he declined the water with decision.

At this delectable place, we took a longer rest than usual, during which we were overtaken by a mule abandoned some miles back. When he fell, his mouth was moistened and a mouthful of hay placed by him, and when he had actually realized that he was left absolutely alone in that dismal desert, he made fresh efforts and hobbled after us. The train plodded on all night, resting a short time each four hours. During a few minutes of sleep at one such halt near daylight, my horse and G.'s which were tied together, wandered away in search of water, and when the wagons started G. and I took their trail following it six or seven miles to the south where we found them standing in a barren hollow, exhausted. Leading the horses, we struck out on foot W. N. W. to intercept the train which we overhauled about noon. From this place the view to the west had been for some time limited by a high sandy ridge, above and far beyond which, loomed up the long range of shining white summits of the Sierra Nevada. As we toiled painfully over the brow of the ridge, we suddenly discerned, scarcely six miles distant, nestling gracefully under the base of the giant and long sought range, a long line of cottonwoods, whose waving branches and exhilarating verdure seemed to beckon us onward to the cool waters that we knew bathed their roots. A universal bray of joy from the mules showed that they too understood the joyful apparition, and notwithstanding thirst and fatigue, the few miles were quickly passed, the loose mules taking a running lead. Even the teams broke into a run, and just before dark, in a promiscuous rush, we reached a fine stream four or five feet deep and forty yards wide, of bright, rushing, cold water, fresh from the snow peaks. Every one hurried bodily into the stream and drank all he could, while urging the others to be

careful and not drink too much. Fortunately Spanish mules never founder, and after drinking all they could hold, they lay down and rolled in the stream mixing up teams and harness in joyous confusion.

Our luck had all come at once. Although the barren desert continued right down to the water's edge, yet on the far side was a lovely grassy bottom, overhung with such splendid cottonwoods as had not gladdened our eyes for 1000 miles. Among these we immediately camped, and after enjoying for a few minutes the delight of the mules, all hands went to sleep without setting any guard. The march except for the half-hour halts, had been continuous for fifty-two hours and we scarcely touched the ground before we were asleep.

August 14th. No one without some such experience as ours can understand the delight with which we turned out this morning and enjoyed the delicious contrast of our surroundings with the recent stern environments of the Humboldt desert. The mules, yesterday so wretched, fairly laughed with content, their round barrels swelled with their fill of grass and water. Even the unaccustomed and almost forgotten whispering of the breeze among the branches overhead was a novelty and delight, producing a curious apprehension of something about to fall on our heads. After enjoying all these new-found pleasures all the morning, including the hunting down by all hands of a large wolf detected almost inside the camp, we caught up in the afternoon and moved twelve miles up the river, which comes down through a rapidly ascending and narrow valley, requiring constant fording. It soon changes its character to that of a rushing mountain torrent, tearing down a rocky channel and foaming over and through numerous obstructions. We suppose we struck it but a few miles above its sink in Pyramid Lake, and shall now follow it to its source. Indeed the nature of the cañon is such that we can no longer leave it if we would, the rocky precipices on both sides, fast rising into inaccessible mountain walls. Our camp tonight is in a minute valley, filled with fine grass and a delightful red berry, growing in abundant clusters on a bush six to eight feet high, which our boys call "buffalo cherries." We used our last

sugar tonight, in making a stew of them, which was not a success, the fresh ones being much more agreeable. Bighorn are abundant on the bluffs, and deer in the bottom. We are in a paradise, so far, but an upward glance indicates a squally time for wagons tomorrow.

August 15th. We were compelled to ford the stream constantly, today, each ford becoming more difficult in consequence of the large and slippery boulders which the rushing torrent conceals till the wagons are upon or against them. Bighorn are constantly in sight on all commanding points, seeming deeply interested in our proceedings. G. and I killed two, and also a fine panther, who after being wounded too badly to get away, made a good fight, for such a cowardly beast. We also had a fine rain, the first since leaving the Rocky mountains, the thunder reverberating grandly among the high mountains around.

August 16th. I came on guard at midnight and had six out of twenty-seven mules turned over to me, the others not being found till near morning. On driving them in, my attention was drawn to a mysterious noise finally traceable to a bunch of brush, which I was afraid to enter alone, for fear of arrows. As it continued, however, and as I was adverse to alarming the sleeping camp, I closed in cautiously, when, instead of an Indian, out bounced a big grey wolf, which I did not fire on for fear of hitting a mule. We still follow the Salmon Trout (or Truckee), much smaller in size, having become a roaring torrent tumbling over lovely cascades of all sorts and dimensions, though sometimes opening out into diminutive mountain glens filled with grass and game, and wide enough to disclose the snowy peaks which now hem us round about. In these valleys the stream is crowded with trout, which are easily caught in willow traps made on the simple plan of the numerous old Indian traps lying about. One fine valley, narrow and steep but several miles long, was covered with splendid grass, full of deer and abounding in old Indian camps. Here we bade farewell to the cottonwoods and struck pine timber growing down to the stream.

August 17th. A pull of two hours brought us to the twenty-seventh and last crossing of the river, now a small though

turbulent stream. Leaving it here we took up the mountain side through a rough and rocky, but at first not very steep, ravine. Large pines, firs and cedars abound, especially the first, some of which are fully six feet through. At the head of a fine spring branch we came on a secluded valley teeming with black-tail deer, its mountain sides showing three several bands of bighorn. This is surely a wonderful game country, which is fortunate, as our provisions are about gone. Today we surprised and caught two Indians, both as naked as they were born, and without even arms, which they had probably concealed. These are very different in appearance from the Humboldt Diggers, and remembering their kindness to the Donner party in 1846, we treated them gently and gave them a little of our vanishing hardtack which they swallowed obediently as though it were part of their sentence, or an unpleasant duty to oblige us. When released, a few steps took them into the brush, where they disappeared without a sound, like rabbits, perhaps expecting to be shot from the rear.

August 18th. Last night we came upon a lone wagon with five Baltimore men, one of whom lay in the wagon, shot through the thigh by the Humboldt Diggers. Their train had been disorganized by death, loss of stock, and all sorts of accidents and they were trying to cross the mountain alone, and were delighted to fall in with us. We made a noon halt in another delightful mountain valley, where the black-tail deer almost crowded us. An ominous stench from one of the wagons led us to overhaul it, when we found our only remaining bag of biscuit a mass of rotten green mould, owing to an unnoticed wetting at some of the numerous crossings of the Salmon Trout. This is a very serious fact, as all the flour is gone, and we were depending on this supply to carry us in. Hitherto we have been fairly supplied with game by volunteer hunters, but now we must make a business of it by detailing every evening, a hunting party of three to start after game at daylight before it gets alarmed by our advance. This afternoon a pack-train of forty men passed us, under Lieutenant Pleasanton, who left Fort Smith, Arkansas, March 25th and have come *via* Santa Fé and Fort Bridger, under guide of two mountain men. They have but three days' provisions left, and being

unencumbered with wagons, are rushing their mules. Their guides pretend to know these mountains, and say we cannot get our wagons across here, and had better abandon them quick and save the mules. But we have heard that sort of talk before.

August 19th. Hurrying on today, we came suddenly on the 1846-47 camp of the ill-fated Donner party, where over eighty persons from Illinois were caught in the early snows and mostly starved to death that winter. On the left-hand side of the gorge we are following on a small plateau among heavy timber, stands a large cabin roofed with ox hides, and a considerable quantity of human and cattle bones lying about. This can be nothing else but the relics of the Donners, and here, then, is the place of which we heard in the States, where they were caught and held in September 1846, by the increasing snows. Their cattle all died; they could find no game, or were unable to traverse the snow after it. A small party, that undertook to cross the mountains under guidance of friendly Indians, perished in the snow. The rest all died of starvation, except one man, who in the summer of 1847 was found here living on the bodies of the others, by a relief party that came from California as early as the Sierra became passable, on the report of two Indian guides who alone had got in to tell the tale. We had heard this story in Independence, and here before us was its shocking confirmation. The stumps of trees cut off many feet from the ground, showed the depth of the winter snows which shut them in from all escape or relief; and here lay their bones, just as the mountain wolves had left them.

It was said in Independence, that General Kearney had found two cabins, which he burned with all the bones and remains he could find. But if that be true, he must have found the remains of another detachment or another party, for here was the unmistakable débris of a large ox-train, including remains of ox wagons, old camp kettles, ox hides, etc. Whatever the facts of this ghastly catastrophe, our short supply of provisions gave us no time for investigation, and hurrying by, we left them as we found them. By 10 A.M. we found ourselves at the base of a naked rocky ridge which, in this bad and difficult pass, is the final ascent, the backbone of the Sierra. For some miles we followed a winding and

rocky gorge, over the abrupt ledges of which the wagons had to be lifted and dragged. At the top of this opens out a small but grassy plateau, where a small rivulet flowing out from the melting snow affords plenty of cold delightful water. Here our hunters awaited us with a goose and a fat deer, and hence a practicable but extremely difficult route up a bare rocky slope as steep as one can well stand on, leads to the summit of the far-famed "Truckee Pass." The road being first carefully examined, we took one wagon at a time and loading the contents on the left-hand side to counteract the sidelong declivity toward the right, and attaching all the teams able to draw, we started up with a man at each hind wheel to "scotch." But finding the wagon still dangerously inclined to slide off over the right hand precipice, ropes were attached to the top, and all who were not working at the wheels held it up toward the left, by clambering along the rocky cliff as best they could. In this laborious way, the men doing more effective work than the mules, all the wagons, including Baltimore, were at last got safely to the summit of the pass. This is a deep notch in the mountain barrier, itself wind-swept and free of snow, but with snow peaks towering above it on both sides, and immense masses filling the hollows far below, being the highest spot of the 4000 miles or more of trail which separate the two oceans.

While the mules were resting and being readjusted in the pass, I undertook to reach the summit of a high (not the highest) peak on the right, in which there was no great difficulty till near the top, where it was necessary to "coon it" on hands and knees up the sharp corner of a mass of naked rock clear of snow. It was bitterly cold, but from the almost pointed summit, the grandeur and wild, confused desolation of the prospect was sublime indeed. North, east and south, peak rose beyond peak in endless succession while in the west the eye looked far down into a chasm where every ravine and gorge shone and glistened with the spotless white of vast snow-fields, and beyond, instead of the expected Sacramento Valley, nothing broke the magnificent expanse of the mountain chains. Thousands of feet down in the chasm—but by no means at the bottom—shone an emerald valley of brightest green,

surrounded with snow-fields and intersected by a lovely stream, sparkling from afar on its way through these fastnesses to the golden Sacramento. Probably no human foot had ever before rested on the spot where I stood, but the wind roared and howled, the day was drawing to a close, and, nearly frozen, I hastened down to mark out the beautiful valley below for camp, where I found the train had nearly arrived, but had unfortunately stopped short of it in a worse place.

August 20th. Early this morning we moved on into *my* valley, where we laid by to rest the mules and hunt provisions. Four of us bagged two black-tailed deer, two bighorn, and three geese. Two of the latter I killed with one ball on the loveliest little secluded lake imaginable. This lay in a deep hollow among the eternal hills so that it could only be reached at one spot, and was covered with geese, many of them followed by long trains of goslings. The water was of a deep emerald green, and apparently very deep. The deer here are all single bucks, who leave their families below and seek the high peaks at this season and feed about the edge of the snow, where they get a mass of fat several inches thick about the kidneys, and the meat drips before the fire like fat bacon. With our contented mules browsing around, big pitch pine fires blazing, plenty of meat, and the consciousness that we were across the summit—this was an ideal camp.

August 21st; one hundred and eleventh day out. Knowing we were over the summit, we started in high spirits this morning, expecting a short, easy down-hill road, but were rudely disappointed, finding ourselves involved in a wild labyrinth of mountains and chasms, with no visible way out. The whole day has been employed in the hardest labor, dragging the wagons over rocky ledges, and hoisting and lowering them over "jump-offs" by "Spanish windlasses" and other mechanical means. At dark we found ourselves at the top of, and looking down into, a deep, rocky gorge with impassable precipices on either hand. Without knowing what might be at the bottom, we undertook to get the wagons down over the huge boulders which choked the gorge. In lowering the second wagon the rope parted, the wagon flew around and rolled over, bringing up among some small pines many

feet below. The entire top was irretrievably demolished, but the important parts seem reparable. The harness is badly broken up, and the wheel mules considerably cut and bruised. The driver saved himself in a somewhat damaged condition, by jumping over the off-mule and alighting in a bunch of chaparral. We had to camp, strung out along the rocky cleft, just as the catastrophe found us, and by the light of some big fires went to work at the repairs. Occasional guns were discharged as a signal to the water hunters who, notwithstanding the ugly precipices and dense darkness, returned after a long absence in no very joyous humor but with water enough for the men and none for the mules, whose only refreshment tonight is the tough and miscellaneous brush growing among the rocks.

August 22nd. With the earliest dawn we recommenced lowering the wagons, finally getting down into a narrow, dark ravine with water which must be the head of some branch of the Yuba. All day has been consumed in getting over another great mountain chain, constantly unloading and in some cases taking apart the wagons and carrying the pieces and contents on our backs. One of the wagons, fortunately the most damaged one, was smashed to pieces and abandoned, its few contents being distributed between the others. On the crest of the mountain we became involved in a chain of lovely, but almost inaccessible, mountain lakes whose deep green waters were the summer home of innumerable geese with long trains of half-grown goslings, which supplied the men well, though the mules have been thirty-six hours without grass.

August 23rd. With W. and J. I started off hunting at daylight, and soon struck a lovely grassy valley a mile long and three or four hundred yards wide. A creek lined with willows and similar brush, ran through the middle. Here we killed a deer, and fastening my horse near it, separated to hunt down the valley, W. and J. taking the west side and I the other, intending that each party should shoot the deer flushed by the other. In this manner we soon killed two more, and snapped at others, the guns missing fire as it was raining smartly, rather a novelty to us by this time. About half-way down the valley, I heard a shot from the other

side, followed by a shout and another shot and then loud and exciting yells to me. It was useless to take up the open mountain side where I could be plainly seen by Indians from both sides of the valley, so, running to the central fringe of brush, I waded the creek and cautiously peeped out beyond. The very first thing I saw was W. making his best speed directly toward my position, with a monstrous grizzly a few feet behind and pressing him hard. J. was gallantly following the bear, loading as he ran, and trying to draw off the enemy by shouts. Quickly taking a good tree rest, I fired at about forty yards, hitting the bear, who halted, shook his head, and looked viciously behind, thinking the insult had come from that direction where there was just then certainly the most noise. His hesitation gave us each another good shot, and, in short, after a good deal of yelling and running about by all parties, Bruin succumbed after receiving eight balls, every one of which struck him somewhere. Though we had seen and shot at the smaller grizzlies of the Rocky Mountains, this was the first of either kind that any of us had actually killed, and we could hardly admire him enough. He was twice as large as any of our Rocky Mountain acquaintance, and though rather poor in flesh, we could not estimate him at less than 1500 pounds gross.

We made a big fire, notwithstanding the rain, and after putting away several pounds apiece of roast ribs, packed as much of the remainder on my horse as he could carry, and abandoned the deer. My fellow hunters both agree that my first shot came at a critical moment when it looked much more like our bringing up inside the bear than having him inside of us. That shot struck and pierced his lower lip, passing through his big jowl, then came out to, but not through the skin, and following it, entered the breast and actually tore off the point of the heart, after all which he was still able to carry on the fight for a time. If it had struck even an inch more to the right, it would have been deflected harmlessly from his massive jaw, and W. at least, would have been caught and killed. We found the train camped in a fine little valley with good grass, the men tired out with the continuous work at the wagons.

August 24th. Another hard day's journey with no grass to-night but what was brought from the last camp, notwithstanding the country teems with all sorts of game which must find grass somewhere. We have now struck oak timber on the lower levels mixed with the gigantic pines, many of which have trunks thick enough to conceal at one time the entire length of a passing wagon. Snow has disappeared except in the deepest ravines, and in low and damp places many new varieties of trees, shrubs and plants appear. Among other new trees is a very curious bush or small tree which is common on all the hillsides. The trunk and large branches are apparently without bark and are of a bright but dark crimson color, polished like ivory. They bear an abundance of clusters of red berries as large as peas, filled with a dry, sweet, white powder very pleasant to the taste.⁸

August 25th. Being delayed by hunting for stray mules, this morning we got off late and were brought up at the brink of a long, precipitous descent which at first seemed like an effectual bar for wagons in that direction. Nevertheless, it was the termination of a long leading ridge the whole of which would have to be retraced to search for a more practicable descent; so we determined to try it and went to work. Commencing with my Cincinnati wagon, which is the smallest and best, we chained the wheels, took out the four lead mules, leaving only the wheelers, cut and chained to the rear axle as large a tree as we could handle for a drag, put all hands on the back ropes, and lowered away. The descent was two miles long, with some bad turns and "jump-offs," but it was at length thus successfully accomplished with both wagons. In climbing up again to get the loose stock, I hastily pulled my rifle out of a bush where I had concealed it about half way up, when it discharged itself in my face, the ball piercing my hat in three places, giving my hair a smart wrench and scorching both hairs and eyebrows.

At the bottom of this mountain we found a small branch running to the left through a narrow but grassy bottom, and the water being considerably discolored, W. and I took our rifles and

⁸ Manzanita.

walked up into the cañon to ascertain the cause. There we found a small camp of overlanders washing successfully for gold. They called the creek "Greenhorn," and showed us quite a lot of bright, shining, yellow scales such as I had never seen before, but we had no difficulty in recognizing it as the attractive bait that had brought to this distant wilderness ourselves and the many thousands coming on behind us. The gold bearing gravel is contained and only found in a small "bar," rarely more than a few feet wide and not over two feet deep to the solid or bed rock, and is so filled with boulders or detached rounded masses of all dimensions, that the wash-gravel is probably less than a fourth or fifth part of the mass. These men had just arrived and were washing the gravel in flat Indian baskets, and already had plenty of gold in small grains and scales, drying on leaves in the sun. Some of them had gone with the best team in search of provisions, which are not to be had about here, and they do not expect to find any on this side of Sutter's Fort, on the Sacramento, which must be quite a hundred and fifty miles distant. As we are pretty tired of living on meat alone, this is not cheering news, since we cannot eat gold. After hearing the little they had to tell us, we geared up and pushed on over a much better road till 9 P.M. when we hastily camped at a creek-crossing in the dark, on the rough banks of a creek where we had to chock ourselves against trees to prevent rolling into the water.

CHAPTER VI

EARLY EXPERIENCES IN CALIFORNIA

August 26th, Sunday; one hundred and sixteenth day out. Our journey is done, and we hardly know what to do with ourselves, and whether to be glad or sorry. No one took the trouble to stand guard last night, and as we cannot have much more use for the mules, we bore with calmness and fortitude their almost entire deprivation of grass. There will be no more Indian alarms, no more stampedes, no more pulling, carrying and hauling at wagons. Notwithstanding ragged clothes and empty stomachs, we are all in an exhilarant and joyous mood. The gold is here sure enough, for we have seen it, and we can raise the color ourselves everywhere, even on this very creek. Our census counts ten men, twenty-four mules, three horses and two wagons of our original party and outfit. On the other hand, we are in rags, almost barefooted, without provisions and almost without tools, nearly all of which have been broken to pieces or abandoned. But however sad for the fate of the poor fellows who fell by the way, we are glad to have got here at all. This creek is a large, or main branch of the Greenhorn, which runs into Bear River at a little distance. Bear River is a tributary of the Yuba, whose waters it must have been that we have followed down from the high Sierra. The Yuba empties into the Feather and that into the Sacramento.

We have been down to see the fifteen or twenty men who are mining at the mouth of this creek on Bear River, and all are doing well, making from one to three ounces each, per day, some even more. We killed two deer, tonight, which postpones the evil day of actual hunger, but they are less numerous here than above and are likely to be well hunted by the hungry emigrants; so gold, or not, we must soon starve or get provisions. They can only

be had here in minute quantities, at the following rates: flour 75 cents, bacon \$1.25 and coffee \$1.00 per pound; molasses \$1.00 a quart, whiskey \$2.00 a quart, or fifty cents a drink. But Sutter's Fort cannot be much over a hundred miles distant, where a town is being started by emigrants who have come "around the Horn," called Sacramento City. It is on the Sacramento at the mouth of the *R. De los Americanos*, and since it is accessible for large ships from the sea, food can no doubt be had there. But there is no use going after it without money, so the first thing to do is to find a good place and go to work to make a "raise."

With the end of that journey, and absorption in the ordinary struggle of life, my diary naturally came to an end. I have drawn on it at considerable length, scarcely changing the words written so long ago, because however marked by the crudity of youth, it may best serve to convey an appreciative idea of the labor, difficulty and anxiety incident to carrying wagons over that long and scarcely known route at a time when the present methods of travel and transportation had hardly crossed the Alleghenies, and the Mississippi was practically the western limit of agricultural settlement. Except the worthless deserts between the Wahsatch and the Sierra Nevada—now occupied by the fraudulent State of Nevada, which contains less population than the smallest ward in Philadelphia—the whole of the country thus traversed, is at the present time more or less settled, much of it enclosed and supplied with the conveniences of social and domestic life. In the part of Kansas where I had such a narrow escape from Pawnees, the country has for years past been closely populated, enclosed and probably well mortgaged. The solitudes of the Wind River and Big Horn Mountains have long been filled with miners, their works and towns, and partially occupied by the National Park. Even the dreary deserts of Nevada have yielded millions of wealth from the mines and river-side pastures. The day will perhaps come when even such a plain statement of ordinary events in traversing those regions, will read like a wild romance to the generation of steady untraveled farmers who will then inhabit them.

Most of the surviving members of our traveling-party proposed to remain and mine together, sending a wagon and party down to Fort Sutter for supplies. But I, being unsettled in my projects, preferred to try my fortune alone for the present. In the division of effects, two mules and a few tools fell to my share, and stopping only long enough to make pack-saddles, I packed all my worldly belongings on the former, and, mounted on the horse which had done such good service, started down to the nearest considerable mining settlement on Bear River. Scattered in several camps along this river, were some fifty men—all just arrived overland like myself—who though in great want of provisions, were doing well in mining. Associating myself with two of them (Lovett and Cook) from Michigan, I turned my stock out to find their own living, and we went to work to get what knowledge we could of our new occupation.

Both my new comrades were farmers, the former perhaps fifty, the latter nearer my own age. Having got out some clap-boards we soon constructed a "rocker," for which the necessary sheet-iron was obtained by flattening out and punching holes in an old camp kettle. Lovett dug the material, I carried it to Cook, who rocked the cradle and ladeled in the water. Though we constantly peeped into the machine, we saw little gold, but being determined to have a fair trial, toiled on all day till the sun, having mounted over one ridge and glared down into our cañon with scorching heat, had passed from sight behind the opposite mountain. Food being scarce, we had few distractions from cooking or other details and doggedly stuck to our work till dark, when we made a fire and gathering expectantly round the rocker, emptied its contents into our one remaining tin pan. Cook insisting on his talent for washing-out, was entrusted with bringing to light the result of the day's labor. Eagerly we all watched the lessening contents of the pan as it was whirled about in his sinewy grasp, till a minute yellow pile revealed itself, worth about quarter of the value of a day's provisions at prevailing prices. We could have earned twice as much husking corn at home. Was it then for this pitiful result we had traversed mountains and deserts, only to beg our way home by tropic shores or perish during the coming winter in these inhospitable mountains?

Silence and gloom was our lot that night, but next day after a scanty breakfast, we put in some more hard work and washed out at night perhaps twice as much of the coy and tantalizing metal. On the third day we set our rocker differently, and at night gathered again in desperate silence round Cook, as pan in hand he sought out a quiet pool. Round and round flew the pan with its momentous secret, but as the revolving gravel slowly disappeared, we almost held our breath as a shining, yellow residuum of gold and black sand gradually revealed itself to our doubting eyes. At the gait of a quarter-horse we rushed up to camp, where old Lovett's scales (homemade, with leaden weights) determined the quantity at three or four ounces, worth about twenty-four dollars an ounce, but passing here in currency at sixteen. The fault had evidently been our own, and after all, there was considerable joy in the lonely cañon on that eventful night. Not that we were so very greedy; for us it was not so much a question of wealth as of food—the alternative was, gold or starvation. Now we knew the gold was there, and perceived how much we had been wasting. The next evening revealed a still larger quantity, but there was yet scarcely enough to warrant a journey to the trading-post of Sutter's, although we were now reduced to a game diet, with a few spoonfuls of dried apples from Lovett's store, and were panting to see some one from "the other side." It was therefore determined to consume another day in accumulating a more commanding capital with which to start Cook with all our pack animals in search of "grub." Our good luck continued and increased, and he soon started with two companions, all the animals and the entire treasury.

About this time, the men of Lovett's train, who had till now remained camped on the main emigrant-trail, prospecting through the mountains, concluded to move their camp and join us. Their cattle were accordingly hunted up and driven in, staring with astonishment at the sudden resumption of their labors. Plenty of hands cut out a road down to our bar, which in gratitude for the dried apples, we called "Lovett's," and which soon had a population of forty or fifty men. The site was a deep cañon shut in by mountain walls on both sides, with a sloping bar of a few

feet width on either bank, from which the overhanging masses shot up apparently to the stars. Overhead a blue streak of sky spanned the chasm, while the larger part of the valley floor was occupied by the rushing river, fresh and sparkling from the neighboring snows. Up and down the curving stream a few hundred yards bounded the prospect, apparently shutting out all the world beyond. Our increasing wealth afforded more time for hunting, the proceeds of which were fairly divided, and though all were constantly and chronically hungry, we were waiting with what resignation we could assume, for Cook's return, when very late one evening, we were all aroused by shots and shouts, and in marched a string of laden mules, with our anxiously expected emissaries. These on their long way to Sutter's had met, not very far below, some trading wagons from that place, which had supplied their most pressing wants and caused an immediate return. Flour, pork, coffee and sugar were the staples, and though the prices were alarming to hungry men, our agents had wisely judged that time was more important to us than money.

Although by the time all was unloaded, distributed and tested it was past midnight, all hands spent the rest of the night in hearing the news, being the first that had reached us since passing the frontier line of Missouri. Though Cook had not been able to obtain a newspaper and had never made any professions as an orator, he had the floor until daylight, and had no reason to complain of the inattention of his audience.

There is little to tell of the month that followed. Two or three times a week it was necessary to herd up our fattening animals, on which occasion I rarely failed to bring in a deer or two. The work was steady and monotonous, but our little pile grew larger from day to day. One prepared breakfast at daylight while the others went to work at "the hole." Dinner was managed the same way, and when too dark to work, we lit our evening fire and while one cleaned up the day's proceeds, another procured fuel and shook out the blankets, while the third prepared the common supper. All meals alike were of coffee, deer meat or pork, with either fried "slapjacks" or bread, baked in a frying pan propped up before the fire. The best of water was always at hand, clear and sparkling as its snowy sources.

The work consisted in removing and washing about two feet in thickness from the surface of our bar. Three-fourths or more of the material consisted of rounded boulders of all sizes firmly packed into the auriferous gravel. There was no temptation or means of spending the proceeds, which were kept by the old man in buckskin sacks, in some secret place known only to himself. The drinking and gambling dens which later infested every part of the mines, were yet unknown, as was theft and crime of all sorts. Less careful persons than our old man, left everything unguarded in tents, when they had any, and under a tree when that luxury did not prevail. The general honesty—probably largely due to the richness of the mines—was usually attributed to the prompt and severe punishment always ready for offenders. In the few cases of theft that occurred—mostly of horse-stealing—the committee of miners that sat for court and jury, neither knew nor cared about forms of trial or rules of evidence. Facts were what they wanted, and were accepted from any source. Arrest, trial and punishment rarely occupied more than a few hours. Any mining-camp where the prisoner might be caught or brought, was ready to take jurisdiction. No warrants, indictments or appeals delayed the proceedings. Both parties told their story. Witnesses, if there were any, were quickly heard. The miners were anxious to get back to their work, and the prisoner was not kept long in suspense.

Whether or not the miners' plan of preventing crime by exterminating the criminals, be the best, no other was then practicable. Criminals, deserters, beachcombers and vagabonds soon swarmed from all the shores of the Pacific, and in the absence of any ordinary machinery of justice, it seemed quite just to the honest and industrious, that such exasperating nuisances should be stamped out by the shortest process. At all events the method was not without substantial advantage while it lasted, and it may be worth the while of philosophers to note that novel judicial phenomena need not necessarily fail because worked out by practical men, not much given to speculation on remote consequences.

Be that as it may, the seclusion and monotony of mining-life soon became intolerable to me. Curiosity constantly grew to

know what was going on below, and what had become of the shiploads of adventurers who had sailed from eastern cities. Rumors of the rapid transformation of Sutter's old Indian-hold into a bustling city, and of a great seaport growing up at "the Bay" had even penetrated our secluded cañon, and it was not long after the following adventure, that I decided to abandon our lonely camp in search of a broader world. We had been at work and accumulating its rewards for perhaps a month, when I left camp one morning at daybreak, to herd up the animals as usual. But after searching all accustomed haunts in vain, I at length found myself on their trail, leading north far beyond their usual range. Not expecting such delay, I was without provisions, blanket, or even a coat, and far beyond the limits of our friendly Indian neighbors; but hoping to come upon the truants every moment, I followed their track for twenty miles or more over a rough and apparently unvisited country. Day was beginning to wane when I got sight of an object which, on cautious approach, proved to be a roving mountain man, or trapper, named Hunt, who having struck the mule's trail, was following it back for information. He readily agreed to help in my search, and as he had passed many years in wandering over the continent, sometimes in a fur company, and at others as a free trapper, and was careless of his time, he was no mean acquisition.

Night was falling fast as from the top of a lofty ridge we discerned a large meadow, traversed by water and abounding in grass. The animals could surely not have passed such a tempting place, and after getting such a night's rest as the frosty mountain air might permit, we should certainly find them in the morning and hurry them back to camp. But just then Hunt's practiced eye made out a dim column of smoke hardly distinguishable from the evening mists, rising from the far end of the valley, and his instant verdict was, "Indians." Should these strangers—probably hostile—find the mules before we did, they would be sure to take their back-trail to find the owners, and if discovered, we were too few to fight, and too far from camp to run. Nevertheless, not being willing yet to abandon the animals, we concluded to gain the edge of the valley, find a suitable place to hide during

the night and see what could be done next day. Creeping into a dense thicket in the dark, not without fear of disturbing some prior occupant, we lay down, without fire, supperless, to sleep. Early in the morning we separated in search of food and information. But the season was too late for berries and too early for kamas, and a few of the former was all that rewarded my search. With these I was glad to get back to the friendly shelter of the thicket, where Hunt soon joined me with part of a deer that came so temptingly in his way in a distant side valley, that he could not help risking our scalps by a shot. The grass of the valley being very high, it both facilitated our search, and contributed to our safety, and toward mid-day we came upon a fine creek, full of trout. These seemed beyond our reach, as we had no fishing tackle and there was no suitable willow for making a fish basket. The old mountaineer, however, solved that difficulty by making one of grass, which soon produced more than we could comfortably carry.

Not long after, we found the mules and not liking such a dangerous vicinity, abandoned the rest of our deer and laid a straight course over the mountains for Bear River camp. Riding hard (bareback) till long after dark, we made a fire in a deep cañon, secured the mules, cooked some supper, and betook ourselves to sleep. Next day we reached camp before dark, and described to eager listeners our creek—then and there christened Deer Creek—with the promising appearance of its vicinity, not forgetting Hunt's interview with a grizzly, during the afternoon. He was riding some yards in advance of me, both of us descending across a precipitous ravine, when as he approached the bottom, his mule snorted and wheeled suddenly, throwing him over its head—he having neither saddle nor bridle—into the little rivulet at the bottom, which was well-concealed by thick brush. Simultaneously, and from the same spot arose a formidable grizzly, which, frightened out of its wits at the sudden assault, dashed up the opposite mountain, leaving the terrified mule crowding up to me for protection, and Hunt lying in the creek, not knowing exactly what had happened. Being above the scrimmage, I had a good view of the whole, and have never yet been able to decide which was the most astonished—the bear, the mule, or the man.

I never afterwards returned to Deer Creek, but Hunt soon after found an old comrade of his, Captain Sears by name, who was mining some miles below us with a number of tame American River Indians; he conducted over there the entire party, where, on the banks of Deer Creek and Gold Run—as they have ever since been called—they struck some of the richest and most famous diggings ever known in California; here soon after was started the flourishing city of Nevada, which is yet, as I am told, a populous and wealthy town, distinguished for its successful quartz mills.

Some time in the early part of October, my finances having been satisfactorily reinforced, I saddled up and pulled out for the "Fort," as Sutter's was then called, but on coming out of the mountains at Gillespie's (or Hoyt's) ranch, I found one Yeldell, a Missourian, engaged in herding emigrant cattle on Lower Bear River in the Sacramento Valley and could not resist his invitation to stop a few days to hunt wild cattle, the emigrant theory being that unbranded cattle were public property, or at least lawful prize. Here I was not long in learning something new, and in some respects more exciting than grizzly or buffalo hunting. Y.'s object was to shoot fat yearlings for jerked beef for winter provisions, but while stalking a small band of cattle for this purpose on foot, an old bull assuming the responsibility for his numerous family, chose to get insulted, and commenced to approach us, bellowing and lashing his tail with every indication of war. He came deliberately, but with such unhesitating directness that even a greenhorn could entertain no doubt of his firm intention to have what in California is termed a "difficulty." Y.'s weapon was a 32 calibre cavalry carbine, but my trusty rifle had recently been lost by lending it to a rascal who liked it so well that he ran away with it, so that my only firearms were the two old single-barrelled pistols, which though from their calibre very effective in case of a hit, were only reliable at close quarters.

As there was no tree or bush in sight, and not even a gulley or arroyo to hide in, I began to feel nervous. "Shall we run?" said I; "he is coming for us." "Run? no; that bull will chase ye five mile. Did ye never hunt wild cattle afore?" When I acknowl-

edged the negative, said he, "Well, what a d—d fool to come out and hunt cattle, the fightingest animile they is, when ye don't know nothing about it. Well, you take this carbine and I'll get along with the pistols. You get in line behind me and jump when I do, and not any sooner or you will get us both killed." The arrangement was soon made, but further explanation of intentions was cut short by the bull, who was by this time at no great distance, increasing his gait, lashing his tail, and tossing his head with vicious bellows. Soon he broke into a run, Y. standing fast till in another second it would have been all over with him. But when the bull, not five yards distant, lowered his head for the last deadly rush, Y. stepped quickly but quietly to one side and as the infuriated animal rushed by, placed a single one-ounce pistol ball behind his shoulder at arm's length. It was enough for the bull, who belched out a cataract of blood and came headlong to the ground. The facts when understood are simple enough. When the bull has made his final calculation and commences his last desperate rush, he shuts his eyes. If one steps aside after that, he is safe, but if even a second too soon he is lost, for the bull can still rectify his direction, and it is too late for further maneuvering. "Now, young feller," said Y., "that is the way how a white man kills a bull. Any sneakin' Spaniard or Injun can rope a bull and let his horse throw him, but this is the way for a man what ain't afraid."

The wild bull—that is, the one who has never been herded up, rounded in, lassoed or branded—is, I think, the noblest game in America, with possibly the single exception of the large, or California, grizzly. He knows no fear, and shrinks from no enemy, having been accustomed all his life to fighting his rivals and other formidable wild animals, and when surrounded by his family is always spoiling for a fight. He will come a mile for his enemy, and will as lief charge a hundred men as one. To kill him in the manner described, involves no special skill or difficult pursuit, but it requires the highest quality of a virtue not too common even among brave men—cool, dauntless presence of mind. At that time thousands of cattle, many of which had never seen a human form, had wandered far from the few and widely separated

ranches, and roamed through the foothills and the secluded valleys they enclose, pasturing by day far out in the great plains of the Sacramento and retiring to the hills at night; but as all that territory has long since been settled and enclosed, cattle really wild, are, I presume, long since extinct within the limits of the United States.

Knowing from recent experience, the scarcity of beef in the mining districts, and understanding that the settlements on the upper American were more populous than those I had last come from, I purchased here a few head of branded but half wild cattle, and leaving my animals with Y., started on foot to drive the cattle to Auburn on the American, a couple of Indian vaqueros undertaking to assist in getting them fairly into the mountains, after which I thought I could manage them alone. In order to get them well tired and docile, my vaqueros ran them fully forty miles the first day, giving me an occasional lift behind them, and helped watch them through the night, but as soon as they left me in the morning, notwithstanding we were now well in among the foothills, my troubles began. The animals were frantically determined to get back to their accustomed pastures on the plain, and kept me on the jump to prevent it through the entire day, when fortunately the people of an arriving emigrant train helped me make a small corral in which they were shut up for the night.

The next day, by running my refractory charges hard all day and giving them no time to concert mischief, I got them at last to Auburn, where I borrowed a rifle and having with the aid of numerous volunteers just then quitting their work on the bar, got them into a suitable place, shot them all, hiring some miners to hang, skin and butcher them during the night. By noon of the next day I had sold out at a handsome profit, and spent the night with two brothers named Thomas, from New York, whom though I had never seen before, I knew of, and was collaterally connected with, and accidently discovered here working on a claim. I have never seen them since that chance meeting. One later became district attorney of the same vicinity and was soon after killed in a duel, and the other after some moderate success returned to New York, where he became a successful broker. The following

morning at daylight with as much of golddust as I could conveniently carry in the pockets of my scanty apparel, I started on foot for my animals at Y.'s. After I had walked some forty miles and it was getting dark enough to look for a camping-place, safe from the numerous robbers who, notwithstanding the prompt vigilance of 'miners' juries,' already infested that part of the country, I left the beaten wagon-trail and turned into a small narrow valley, when before I had left the road fifty yards I found myself face to face with three large grizzlies, who quietly sniffed and eyed me, as much as to say, "Why don't you keep to the road? What do you want here?"

It was fast getting dark and my only firearms were two single-barrelled pistols. It was evidently only a question of how to retire most gracefully. The narrow valley was bare of shelter, and the smallest of the great pines on the mountainside was several feet too large to climb. I thankfully solved the etiquette of the occasion by backing slowly out to the road, and soon as I got timber between us, taking to my heels, the bears continuing, while in sight, to gaze intently at the impertinent intruder with some suspicious sniffing but no other active sign of displeasure. From later experience I should say it was probably a family party of a she-bear and her grown cubs, which in that country where their subsistence is so abundant, often remain with their mother till they are several years old and larger than the parent. After this rencontre, I swung along down the road but had not gone far, when, it getting to be pretty dark, I suddenly met another bear squarely in the wagon road, but having the wind of him saw him first and took up the mountain out of his way. Now I was well aware of and keenly looking out for the danger of being followed by robbers, who had seen at Auburn what I carried, and whose usual method is to shoot from ambush, giving a man no chance; but I was by no means counting on so much bear, so I camped on the mountain, then and there, well content to dispense with both fire and water, under the circumstances. Next morning the thick red dust in the road was absolutely full of bear tracks, looking much like that of an immense widened negro foot; but I arrived at Y.'s in due course and after indulging with him in a

little more wild calf hunting, quieting the bull's objections in the same way—which is really easy enough when once well learned—I started for Sutter's, across the wide Sacramento plains.

Fording the American a short distance above its mouth, and leaving the Fort on the left, I advanced a couple of miles to the Sacramento through a miscellaneous collection of abandoned tents and wagons, in many of which men lay dying and dead, just as their friends had abandoned them! Those yet alive were mostly suffering from dysenteric complaints and were in every form of extremity, but mostly unconscious and moribund. I looked into a number of tents and gave some trifling aid, but many occupants were dead, others speechless and dying in filth, solitude, thirst and misery, so that I was glad to get away to the lively camp at the river already called Sacramento City. It was then but a camp of tents and wagons disposed in two long rows called "H" and "J" streets, interspersed with an occasional shanty of muslin stretched on poles. Several large vessels lay tied up at the banks, having brought emigrants 'around the Horn,' and were a delightful feature to one so long buried in the far interior. In the confusion and excitement of this unique crowd, where for the first time in their lives the drawling butternut-colored backwoodsman of the West, knocked against the keen Yankees arriving from an opposite direction, I passed a few days, during which I sold my mules and had my horse stolen, lying at night in my only blanket, pistols in hand, concealed in a gully or arroyo at some distance on the plain.

Here I soon became acquainted with one Moore, a man scarcely over forty, though an old Missouri River steamboat captain, and made camp with him beyond the American, where he possessed a couple of wagons and twelve or fourteen yoke of good cattle, and with whom were eight young fellows who had come with him from Missouri, they providing their own food and arms and he finding the teams and other necessities for the journey. M. had come in later on our trail, and stopping on the main branch of the Greenhorn, had drained a deep natural hole in its bed, and from a small space at the bottom, not larger than a small dinner table, had taken \$40,000, over which one of his faithful "pikers"

now stood guard by day and night. I was not long in acquiring a great liking for this party, and added my own smaller pile to the "bank" which was all M.'s property, his young men having preferred to work for him on the wages of five dollars a day, certain, and double that "if he got anything." There was considerable chagrin at the way the bargain had turned out, and being a jovial lot they were never done chaffing each other about it, but not being covetous or greedy, they expended their jokes on each other and looked up to M. with a faith and admiration that knew no bounds. And in fact he well deserved it. Taking up a spot which a more numerous party, after vainly working at for several weeks, had abandoned as impossible to clear of water, he had in three weeks, almost without tools, and with little provisions but the proceeds of each morning's hunt, built a dam, constructed two flumes along the vertical rock walls of the cañon, made two pumps operated by flutter wheels in the flumes, and had pumped out an irregular crevice some forty feet in depth, and secured the above reward for his ingenuity and good luck, for it must be admitted that such opportunities were not numerous even then. After a few days' acquaintance and mutual confidences, M. confided to me his wish to build a sawmill somewhere adjacent to the mining-camps above, where lumber was worth a dollar a foot, with great demand and no supply. His men, willing to be settled for the winter, had agreed to work for him at five dollars per day, and his present business was to find the necessary mill-irons. He knew nothing about saw-mills, but had a general idea he could make one work, while on the contrary, from my experience in handling slabs and logs in the Pennsylvania backwoods in 1846-47, I felt confident I could contribute some special though superficial knowledge to the project. I therefore promptly accepted his proposition to put my capital and efforts into the enterprise, proposing Bear River as the site, and we forthwith entered upon a regular search for mill-irons.

The arriving vessels had disgorged masses of machinery, comprising all sorts of gold-washing contrivances, which in the wild and frantic rush to the mines, had been abandoned on the banks for want of transportation, and most of which were entirely use-

less for the original or any other purpose. This trash, which seemed to include nearly everything except what we wanted, lay in piles along the river, and although it contained nothing designed for such purposes as ours, we at length discovered a thirteen-inch crank which was the most essential, for possessed of that, it was possible to make all the other parts of wood. As some fancy price would have been demanded for this article had we disclosed our necessities, I opened negotiations for the entire pile of iron "to start a blacksmith shop"—which indeed was a necessary part of our design, and purchased it for one hundred ounces, equivalent to \$1600, as golddust was then rated, which was but little over two-thirds its bullion value. We carried off the crank, part of a rag-wheel, some gudgeons, and other small articles which might be of use, abandoning all the rest of the heap, greatly to the vendor's surprise, as there was considerable wrought iron among it, quite suitable for a blacksmith's use. We lost no time in loading the wagons with provisions for six months, axes, saws, a grindstone and other tools, and I took the opportunity of obtaining from an emigrant an excellent small bore rifle.

It must have been on one of the first days of November that we pulled out from Sacramento, pushed through the terrible Golgotha that lay between the rivers, forded the American, and camped a few miles beyond in a fine grove of live-oaks. On that very night commenced the rains of that unusually inclement season, which is still remembered as the worst for rains, floods and inundations, in all California annals. It rained all night and the next day, and though it showed no signs of abating, the ground was already so soft, and the sloughs so full, that we were glad to get our stuff back to the river with much difficulty, by dividing up our loads and making several trips, camping on the highest ground to be found on the banks of the American, which was already impassable by ford. Knowing little then of the climate with its protracted droughts and long-continued rains, we waited several days, but as the rain kept on, streams and sloughs overflowed, and the entire valley seemed likely to become inundated—as in fact it did—it was plain we must find some other way of transporting our effects to the mountains.

After considerable reflection and discussion, we therefore went to work, hewed out planks and built a scow, eight by forty feet, on which we loaded the goods, starting off three good men with the stock and empty wagons to pick their way along the banks of the streams—which being highest, are usually the last ground to be overflowed—and meet us where Bear River debouches from the mountains, and hard ground might be looked for. The rest of us, after considerably increasing our outfit of provisions, made oars from the best material we could find, and a large square sail from the wagon covers, and undertook to navigate the Sacramento, Feather and Bear Rivers to the same vicinity.

Dropping down the rushing turbid current of the American, though rather exciting, offered little difficulty, but when we swung out into what had now become the sweeping torrent of the Sacramento, the progress up stream was slow, laborious and dangerous, especially in consequence of the large quantity of driftwood. The rain seemed almost incessant, and it was only occasionally that the prevailing high winds gave us an auxiliary push against the rushing current of the swollen river. I remember that on one occasion after toiling all day with oar and pole, we were not out of sight, across a point, of our last camp. Immense tracts of the level valley were under water, in many places almost as far as the eye could range, and but for the fringe of trees along the immediate river banks, a narrow strip of which was mostly free from water, we might have missed our way altogether, and found ourselves far out in the middle of the wide valley. Large numbers of elk, with an occasional deer and coyote, driven from the tule beds, were frequently seen and killed along the margin of the river proper, and several deer were seen swimming the river, in search of

Some safer world in depth of woods embraced;
Some happier island in the watery waste.

The instinct of the deer, though sufficient to remind him of his great hunger and discomfort where he was, apparently failed to inform him that the other side was no better, and accordingly there was about an equal number crossing in each direction.

Finally, after many days of exposure and hard work, rowing, poling, cordelling and warping from the banks, we at last arrived with the scow and its seven tons of lading at a place on Bear River where long and dangerous rapids, obstructed by rocks and logs and overhung by the low branches of trees, seemed to forbid all further navigation even at the present high stage of water. Here therefore the boat was unloaded, the cargo carried piece by piece to a dry knoll not far distant, where it was compactly piled on logs cut for the purpose, and covered with the sail, well secured from animals by heavy logs. From here M. and the men started on foot to make connection with the wagons, while I took the empty boat down alone, and in two days with the steering oar alone, covered the route which up stream had cost us so many days of hard labor, landing the boat safely at Sacramento, where I had no difficulty in disposing of it for \$420, to be used somewhere up river as a ferry boat. After making up for lost sleep by a long bear's nap at Sacramento, and devoting several days to the exposing and laborious journey back, which was mostly made by wading along the tree-covered river banks, tumbling into and swimming the concealed sloughs, and so forth, I rejoined M. at the provision depot. He had found the wagons, but it was impossible to get them to the provision camp. He had therefore placed them in corral at the foot of the mountains, about twenty miles distant, setting the men to work making pack-saddles, with instructions, when finished, to bring the cattle down with yokes and chains without wagons, on the first fine day. After witnessing my safe return, M. started back to the wagon camp, and the weather setting in bad again, I remained solitary for a week or two, surrounded by water, though with plenty of wood and all the ducks I chose to shoot, but for the most part seeing no other living thing.

Yet even in this lonely situation a rencontre occurred which shows how narrow is the world we live in. About dusk one evening, a mounted man, endeavoring to get down from the mines to Sacramento by following the comparatively high and tree-marked banks of streams, stopped at my camp, got some supper and passed on without recognition. Shortly after, hearing shouts, I ran down through the shoal water to a deep slough I knew of, into

which his horse had wandered and was swimming about at random in the darkness, with a good chance for final exhaustion and drowning. Aided by my voice, horse and man found their way out. I insisted that he remain with me till daylight should make traveling safer. We therefore lit our pipes, and in the leisurely conversation which ensued, it appeared that my guest, though considerably older than myself, had been born in the same block of the same street, had attended the same church or 'meeting' and gone to the same school. I never met him before nor since, and have no knowledge what became of him afterward, but surely the accidental interview during a single night in that solitary place, may be set down among the most remarkable of coincidences.⁹

After my long and tiresome vigil, I was not sorry one fine morning to see our whole party come splashing into camp with all the horses, and the best-behaved oxen. M.'s plan was to pack them quickly and return immediately, taking advantage of every good day to make a round trip, the bad weather being likely to give plenty of time for resting between trips. The quiet oxen were to be packed on saddles, the others were to be yoked and were expected to carry from 150 to 200 pounds on the yoke. In the course of time we thus got all our stuff to firm ground where the wagons could receive it, the crank being carried by four men on a stretcher or hand-barrow.

One could hardly go astray for a water power on upper Bear River, and an excellent one promising a maximum of power with a minimum of preparation, was soon found. Here a block-house was constructed commanding a corral (also solidly built of logs) and access to water which could not be cut off. Here we settled down to the winter's work, cutting, squaring and fitting timbers for dam and mill and preparing the wooden machinery of the latter from oak wood seasoned in the large log chimney, the cogs being boiled in the camp kettle for the same purpose; but this being only deep enough to hold one end at a time, we took turns in

⁹ This was John Elliot, Jr., a stepson of Thomas Shipley and half-brother to Samuel R. Shipley, now President of the Provident Life and Trust Company of Philadelphia.

watching and turning them through the night. The cattle being required for work most of the day, had to be driven daily at 2 A.M. to the top of a lofty grassy plateau two or three miles distant for pasture, returning to work at breakfast time, and fastened up safely in the corral at evening. Though such relations as we had with the neighboring Indians were professedly friendly, driving the cattle to pasture alone by night was not a job that any one hankered after, and therefore it fell to me. I always got them on the grass before daylight, concealing myself till ready to return, so that the danger lay principally in traveling to and fro, especially as over part of the route but one track was available.

Nearly all wild animals, where undisturbed, seem to be active just before and after the break of day. It is then the deer feeds, plays, and makes love; bears of all kinds are digging for roots or hunting mast; wolves, coyotes, foxes and other small predaceous animals are returning from their nightly prowlings, and if they are bachelors without families at home, seeking safe places of concealment for the coming day. Though afraid to fire a gun so far from camp, I had many interesting hours in watching the various habits, pursuits and gambols of such denizens of the forest, the more so perhaps that I was not covetous of spoil. By means of judicious ambush I often found myself in the very midst of a small family of the polygamous deer, with opportunity of observing unseen their most unstudied frolics and domestic discipline, and the bear's method of hunting his breakfast became almost as familiar as my own.

At last, as the long mountain winter began to draw to a close, our dam and water-wheel were completed, material for the mill was being set up, machinery ready to put in place, a large supply of saw logs cut and hauled, and we were beginning to look for speedy results of our labors, not having seen a white man in the vicinity, when we were surprised by a visit from an American ranchero accompanied by a lot of his Spanish and halfbreed vaqueros, who claimed ownership, by a Mexican twenty-league grant, of the ranch at the debouch of the river into the plains twenty miles below, on the limits of which he pretended we were trespassing. I have since had reason to believe the main facts he

alleged were true except as to limits. Such a grant made in an unexplored territory with reference to some one point on a river or a mountain, and without any specified boundaries, had not, and could not have, any limits till these were fixed years afterwards by the Surveyor-General of the United States under the treaty of 1847. Till such adjustment, of course, a claimant could claim any limit he pleased, but there never was any pretence that until judicial adjudication of his title, and official adjustment of his boundary line, he had any right whatever sufficiently definite to maintain ejectionment.

But at that time we knew little of the facts, and nothing of the law or treaty, and laughed at the "cheek" of our visitors, till getting tired of them, we ordered them away, inviting them to come up and put us off whenever they felt ready to begin. It was not many days after, till taking us at our word, some fifteen or twenty vaqueros, led by one or two Americans, suddenly descended from the hills in the rear, shouting and firing, but a timely alarm having been given, we quickly had force enough at the house to hold them, while our men working at a distance slipped in by routes inaccessible for horses. When our force was complete, as the enemy, notwithstanding their noise and wild shooting, did not seem inclined to assault the cabin, we all sallied forth and opened fire from rocks, trees and stumps, and whipped them with ease in a few minutes. We then let them recover their wounded and retire, warning them that if we had lost a single man we would have caught and hung the entire gang.

A considerable time elapsed, during which we heard no more of them and had almost ceased to think of the affair, when another stranger appeared of very different character but on the same errand. This was Captain D. of the U. S. Army, who showed an order from General Riley, Military Governor of California, with headquarters at Monterey, requiring him to remove all squatters—and especially us—from Gillespie's Ranch, in accordance with the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between Mexico and the United States, and informed us that he had some forty soldiers on the other side of the river with a howitzer, brought up for the purpose. This was, of course, a high-handed and wholly illegal

proceeding, neither the grant in question nor any other Mexican grant having yet been adjudicated or surveyed, nor had any machinery or tribunal been yet organized with special jurisdiction for executing the details of the treaty. No civil law or government existed in the territory, nor even a court, other than the old Mexican *alcaldes* of the most limited and local jurisdiction. There was not even an *alcalde* existing within several hundred miles, and we had never so much as heard the name of General Riley. Nevertheless, military law is the will of the commanding officer, and there stood his representative with the means of blowing us all to kingdom come, without loss to himself, unless with ten men we could take the gun from a force four times superior in number, in a position of their own choosing. The Captain was sympathetic and kind, and deeply regretted his orders, especially when he learned how we had made good our claim by administering a good licking to his clients, which immensely delighted him and all his party. But he must execute his orders. He would give us any reasonable time for decision, in fact did not like enforcing Mexican claims against Americans, anyhow. But he had no option in the matter; orders must be obeyed. After much discussion, I personally became convinced that law or no law, we were to be put off summarily and were in presence of a force amply sufficient for the purpose, upon which we could inflict little or no injury. Our men were willing to stand by us, but what good would it do us to pick off a few poor devils of soldiers, who would much rather fight with than against us, and then have our place shelled and destroyed about our ears?

All the money I had was in the enterprise, but it could not be recovered by fighting; even if momentarily successful. It seemed an infamous thing that these wild mountainsides, inhabited only by semi-hostile Indians, with only one house between us and Sutter's Fort, a hundred miles distant, and where we had never seen a white face, should thus be adjudged without a hearing to a hostile claimant, by a distant general who had never seen, and knew nothing about, either the property or the 'squatters.' M. was undecided, and I did not like to seem to desert him, but being myself convinced that nothing—not even satisfaction—was

to be got by fighting the soldiers, I offered to sell out to him all my rights in the premises for his American mare—brought from Missouri and now in fine condition—and a pair of blankets. The proposition was accepted, and next morning at daybreak I departed for Sacramento, leaving M. as sole owner, to settle with the Captain as best he could.

Before going on with my personal narrative, I will here state the issue of the saw-mill contest as afterwards learned from other parties, since I never again saw any of those concerned. Though M. was a professed 'fighting man,' he had plenty of cool sense at bottom, and becoming convinced in due time that he could not fight the United States, he gave in and surrendered. Keeping his party together, he conducted it to Grass Valley (Nevada City) where he made quite a fortune by the successful construction and management of a 'ditch' or conduit to supply water at the proper levels for miners' use. But he or some other interested person must have kept a watchful eye on the saw-mill property, for during the following summer when it was in successful operation producing lumber with a ready sale at \$300 to \$400 per thousand, when everything was baked dry with the summer heats, it was set on fire one night and everything about the premises destroyed. By whom the deed was done, was never ascertained with certainty, but I never heard that the public lay awake much at night guessing about it.

For myself, I took leave of my companions in the early morning, poorer than the day I crossed the Sierra, and giving Gillespie's a wide berth, kept on down the valley hugging the river banks closely, as the entire central part of the great valley was at this time a boundless lake. Reaching the Sacramento at the mouth of the Feather I found established a ferry scow operated on a rope suspended across the former river, which it was necessary to cross, a large part of the eastern bank being entirely under water. I therefore rode down into the scow and asked to be set across. The ferryman seemed to make a needless delay which I scarcely noticed at first, till a man ran out of the ferryman's cabin, some hundred yards back from the bank, and ordered me to bring up 'that stolen horse.' Then I understood the game,

and drawing my rifle, ordered the boatman to cast off and be quick. The man on the bank seeing I was not going to be a docile prey, ran back to the house from which he soon emerged again with two others all carrying guns. But by this time the current had caught the boat and was rushing it across at a rapid rate, and I faithfully promised the boatman to 'save' him first if any delay or an accident happened to the boat. Seeing the fellows on the bank, though they had made a little miscalculation, meant business, I laid down at the far end of the boat, where I had the boatman securely in front of me, took a good solid elbow rest and fired. The nearest rascal dropped his gun, which went off in the air, clapped both hands to his breast, and staggered back to his friends, one of whom retired with him, while the other took a long shot at me which passed close but missed.

By this time I was reloaded, but refrained from firing, partly because I judged the increasing distance too great, and partly because I desired at the proper time to settle accounts with my friend in the boat. As soon therefore as we touched the landing, I ordered my man forward among some trees growing on the bank and followed close with the mare. He soon showed that he was himself unarmed, and averred that the others were robbers who had taken possession of his house against his will, and that this was their first attempt. Partially accepting his story, I ordered him to get into the boat and cut both slings, which would have sent him and it flying down the river. But he protested his innocence and begged so hard, that on his solemn promise to remain where he was for one full hour, I cut one sling only, and threw it in the river, thinking it would occupy him most of that time to make the necessary repairs.

Though not long afterwards I was again at this place—as presently to be related—all the parties had departed and I never heard anything more of them. One fellow certainly learned a good lesson, but I have ever since been in doubt whether—considering the murderous character of that class of wretches—full justice was done to the boatman. I quickly mounted my mare which had behaved with the most lady-like propriety—interested in but not scared at the shooting—and took my way as rapidly as possible

down the river. The high water and far extended inundation in the tule, reaching apparently to near the foot of the Coast Range, confined the passage to a narrow strip of bank mostly but not everywhere free from water, and fairly well marked out by the marginal trees. It was intersected by many deep and some wide sloughs, the wading and swimming of which kept me soaked from head to foot, but I found a dry place to camp. In the evening of the following day I reached Sacramento and was soon ferried across to the new town.

CHAPTER VII

FROM SAN FRANCISCO BY SEA TO PANAMA

Sacramento had already grown almost out of my recollection, and a much more orderly condition of affairs prevailed. The streets had been leveled and the stumps cut out, the dead cattle had been covered up or removed from the big hole which had formerly occupied most of J street, in the center of the place, and even a theatre had been started on the bank near the mouth of the big slough, in a canvas structure composed of the sails of abandoned vessels. Large embankments had been constructed to keep out the water, which stood higher than the streets. I even found a safe corral with plenty of hay, in which I deposited my mare in place of picketing her out in a back street, and had the privilege of sheltering myself in the stableman's tent. In the evening I visited the theatre, being the first similar place of amusement I ever attended, so far as I remember. The stage, curtains and seats were rude affairs, with candles for light, and for floor the muddy ground.

Next morning, American horses being in demand for harness, and commanding many times the price of the natives, I sold my mare at a high price and promptly converted the proceeds into a half share in a whaleboat, which we lost no time in loading with provisions and started for Nye's Ranch, now known as Marysville, the head of navigation on Feather River.

My new partner was an Irish sailor, a good, honest, hard-working young fellow, as long as the atmosphere was free from whiskey. The mysterious promptness with which his cherished bottles vanished from the places in which they had been carefully stowed, filled him with amazement, as it never for an instant occurred to him that anyone could be so lost to all sense of comfort and pleasure as wilfully to throw them overboard. At the mouth

of Feather River I proposed that we should land and clean out the gang of robbers, through whose hands I had slipped a few days previously. This he was willing enough for, but as we were having a tough job working up against the swollen current, proposed we should defer it till our return with an empty boat and favorable stream. At Nye's we quickly sold out to the mule packers engaged in supplying the miners in the mountains, and started down with no work to do but steer. We landed at the ferry, on hostile thoughts intent, approaching the shanty from the rear, but to my disgust found a new ferryman, the old gang who had attacked me having cleared out.

We made several trips from Sacramento to Nye's, doubling our capital on each occasion, but as "Man never is, but always to be blessed," I soon got tired of the monotony, and could not be content without getting back to the mountains. So, finding an opportunity to sell out to good advantage, I purchased pack mules, and loaded them at Nye's for the upper bars of the Yuba. To these I made a number of successful trips, increasing my number of mules, and hiring the necessary labor to help, and had I possessed a more moderate ambition, or been in less 'haste to be rich,' might have avoided much loss and travail of body and mind. All travel above Foster's Bar, having been cut off by heavy snows, numerous exciting rumors prevailed of the starving condition of the successful miners who were shut in above with plenty of gold but no food. Having my mules in good condition, at this time I conceived the idea that by selecting ten of the best and loading them with half the usual weight, the forty miles of deep snow which had for some time past barred all communication between Foster's and Goodyear's, could be traversed. Accordingly my partner, an Indiana man, and I prepared a small train and we both started with it ourselves, leaving our Mexicans in charge of the remaining mules to recruit in the valley. There is—or was then—but one practicable mule trail between the places named. Crossing the river at Foster's it immediately ascends a long and steep spur about ten miles to the top of the dividing ridge, which it keeps for over twenty miles, most of which is along a narrow knife edge and then by a bad and rough descent of six

or eight miles comes down to Goodyear's Bar at the Fork of the North Fork of the Yuba.

Swimming the mules across at Foster's the night before and giving them two good feeds of barley, we started up the ridge at daybreak with the intention of getting through in one day if possible. With picked mules and half loads there was little difficulty in getting up the ridge, notwithstanding there was then some snow even down on the bar, which of course augmented in quantity as we increased our altitude. But on the summit, untraversed for some weeks past, the snow lay deep and unbroken and in many places was too soft to bear animals. The narrow ridge was frequently intercepted by fallen trees, which were difficult to get over or around, the adjacent snow being kept soft by radiation of heat from the wood. Hence the labor of filling holes with snow, and of unloading and loading mules was almost continuous, and it was getting dark when we arrived, wet and weary, at the top of the long and rough descent to Goodyear's. Another storm had come on, fresh snow was falling, and a freezing tempest swept across the narrow ridge. The descent, hard for loaded mules at any time, was not to be thought of in a dark and tempestuous night, with the rocks and brush covered and concealed by masses of fresh snow. Though doubtful whether ourselves or the mules could endure till morning where we were, there was no admissible alternative but to try it. Unpacking the mules with half-frozen fingers, we secured them by twos and threes in the most sheltered places accessible, fed them with flour, and ate some raw bacon ourselves after vainly trying to make a fire.

There could be little moving about for us, and none for the animals, as the drifting snow rapidly covered the brush, leaving dangerous hollow traps underneath. Finding the mules disposed to lie down as it grew colder, we were obliged to alternate through most of the night between whipping them up, and jumping about ourselves to keep from freezing. When morning dawned at last, three mules were dead and the packs, covered deep with snow, could only be found by prodding for them with sticks. Only eight complete packs and saddles could be found, and packing them on the seven surviving mules, we at last effected the descent

by following closely the edge of the ridge, all traces of the trail having been deeply covered.

It is said, and I have no doubt that snow lay full thirty feet deep on the divide during that memorable winter, and probably twice as deep in the hollows. During the ensuing summer dead mules abounded along the trail, hanging in the trees overhead where they had lodged as the snow disappeared. There were several score of starving men at Goodyear's and points above, who having plenty of gold, took our entire lading at four dollars a pound before it was off the mules' backs. Though there was little snow down on the river, there was no food whatever for mules, and as there was no possible way to get them out except by the same route, it was necessary to abandon them or return at once. The trouble was to get them up the mountain, where the trail was obliterated and the rocks and obstacles so concealed as to make it very dangerous for animals and by no means easy for men. The unfortunate mules, after getting a scanty feed of flour, had the aid of a lot of miners in getting up on the ridge where we camped that night, and on the next evening after an exhausting day's journey through snow not yet packed, reached Foster's Bar, and next morning hurried on down to grass.

That trip though successful itself to a certain extent, had a sequel. A number of packers had accumulated below Foster's detained by the snow above, but ready to rush their loads in at the earliest opportunity. I frankly gave the prices I had obtained, with the equally frank opinion that the trail was for the present effectually blocked. Thinking quite naturally, that we were hurrying down to return quickly with another load, many of them hurried in their trains. Some of these were lost on the mountain and never reached Goodyear's at all. But a number of mules variously estimated at from two to three hundred, got through to the bar, where they were effectually blocked in, and all perished except about a dozen which were bought for a trifle by the celebrated "Cuteye Foster" and brought down through the river cañon with the help of a large tribe of friendly Indians, a passage which probably no four-footed animal ever traversed before or since. My expedition, though it saved the miners,

seemed destined to bring disaster to everyone else including myself. On my next trip into the mountains, I was rather suddenly attacked with what was there called 'mountain fever,' probably one of the protean forms of bilious intermittents. As a fatal issue was inevitable if laid up where I was, I rode down almost without stopping to Nye's, where I arrived nearer dead than alive and in a delirious condition. My partner had the grace to put me in a small canvas lodging-house, where I lay ill and helpless for some time, during which he disappeared with the mules and everything else except the contents of my pockets, and I never saw or heard of him afterwards.

Rest, a milder climate and a strong constitution sufficiently improved my condition to enable me to take passage in a small sternwheel steamboat, which had just found its way to Nye's and was lying at the bank, bound for 'the Bay,' as San Francisco was then known in the interior. I had myself carried on board by some kind-hearted fellow-lodgers, but remember little of what transpired till I was taken ashore at San Francisco by the deck hands and deposited like any other worthless cargo, in a sailors' boarding-house on the beach near North Point. This house was a long narrow canvas structure containing three tiers of bunks on each side, all closely occupied at night, and many during the day, by drunken sailors of all nations, in various stages of rum, fist-cuffs and brawling. Drunk or sober, they were all kind and sympathetic with one in my condition, and searched out and brought me an individual who, though he certainly looked more like a pirate, passed for a doctor, and charged me an ounce a visit, which soon swallowed up my modest 'pile.'

Whether owing to him, or in spite of him, my health and strength improved, till my money was gone, when the 'doctor,' suddenly losing his interest, informed me that he could do nothing more for me in so bad a climate, and that my only hope for life lay in a voyage to the Islands (Sandwich) or some other mild climate. As the condition of my funds would have about equally justified a tour of Europe, this advice left me a prey to patent medicines, of which every sailor possessed his own infallible variety. At last, finding it necessary to work or starve, some

English sailors offered to ship me, and supported me to the beach, where Captain Franklin, of the English barque *Change* was trying to ship a crew and glad to get anyone, as many fine vessels were then every day being abandoned for want of men to navigate them. With him I engaged at fifty dollars a month—about half the current wages—for a voyage in ballast, via Callao, to Iquique and the Chinchas, there to load guano for Liverpool. The ship lay at anchor in the lower bay and was to sail the same evening, her crew possessing the usual tendency to run away as fast as they were shipped and received their advances.

Not much preparation was required by me, for my boarding-master confiscated all my advance money, and every other possession had been lost or stolen except what I wore on my back. So three or four of my British hearties borrowed a ship's boat, wrapped me up in the stern sheets and undertook to beat out six or seven miles to the anchorage against a smart sea breeze which raised a rough choppy head sea in the bay, but finally had to take to the oars. When after a long pull and a good drenching we got alongside, and the mate saw me rolled up in the wet sail, shaking with chills and looking like death, he sung out, "What have you got there?" "O, he's drunk; heave us a bight." This being readily accepted as a very natural explanation, I was soon hauled aboard and sent to the forecastle to 'sober off.' The captain soon came aboard, without having had much success in getting a crew, and as there were not hands enough on board to weigh the anchor and beat the ship out over the bar, the crew of the American ship *Charleston*, which lay at anchor near by, was borrowed for the purpose, returning to their vessel with the pilot.

As there is nothing so well understood and so heartily sympathized with by honest sailors of all ranks and every nation, as a good, plain, helpless 'drunk,' of which I possessed the credit, I was considerably let alone till next morning, when all hands were mustered to count off the two watches. Though frightfully seasick, a marvelous improvement in my general health had already occurred, and though I was put promptly at work, it was but a few days till I was entirely well, with strength and spirits rapidly returning. The *Change* was a good and staunch, but slow-

sailing bluff-bowed old collier of 400 tons, then deemed a good-sized vessel. Besides officers, she had but three men before the mast, including myself, instead of at least twelve, which would have been a fair crew for her. But beside the captain and mates, who had grown up from apprenticeship in employ of the same owners, she carried two stout apprentice boys and a carpenter—half officer, half man—who was the best seaman forward of the quarter-deck. Everyone on board, except the three newly shipped foremast Jacks, were of well-tested fidelity, having declined to desert the ship at San Francisco and run away to the mines, a temptation to which even men-of-war's crews then usually succumbed when they got the opportunity. The captain was a worthy man, and a safe, slow, conscientious navigator, who never 'carried on,' and who in view of the short-handed crew, spent almost every night on deck, where wrapped in a rubber coat he got his naps with one eye open, close by the wheel. The second mate was a stupid ass, never conspicuous for anything, but the mate was a smart, driving young fellow not very much older than myself and perpetually oppressed with an unquenchable desire to take all the change he could get out of me, as the only Yankee and 'Johnny Raw' on board. We were therefore not long in getting into collision, and our perpetual rows and shindies furnished the principal topic of daily interest during the long and monotonous voyage.

Since with the mate's hospitable intentions and my inflammable temper, we never agreed about anything, it was not difficult to find subjects of contention, which would possess little interest for anyone, except for the serious events to which they led. Though less exacting with the other hands, he was afflicted with an absolute moral inability to see me on deck, watch or no watch, without setting me at work of some kind, whether useful or not. The most prominent of these occasions, all occurring during my proper watch below (for of course I could not object to work in my watch on deck) were as follows: First, he put me to work, in an insulting manner, at coal-tarring the chains, anchor and hawse-holes, when I promptly took occasion to capsize—accidentally—the coal-tar bucket, whose contents ran up and down in great black streams over the newly painted fore-castle deck, with the rolling of the

vessel. When this was investigated, although I received a good public 'wooling' from the skipper, I am convinced the mate got as good in private, the subject being suddenly dropped. His next haze was to send me to the foremast truck to slush down spars, the slush bucket being suspended in the usual manner alongside of me by a single whip purchase under my control. As this was in effect requiring one man to work in both watches—for a trifling job not in the least necessary, and which might have waited for a month without injury to anything—I was justly exasperated, and maneuvered, by watching the ship's roll and letting go at the right moment, to drop the bucket, which weighed at least fifty pounds, on his head. It just cleared his nose, and smashed to atoms at his feet! My continued succession of 'accidents' and this narrow escape, seemed to quiet him for a time, but one day, seeing me smoking my pipe in peace and tranquillity on the combings of the main hatch, while the deck watch was painting ship, he could not resist the opportunity and ordered me over the side to paint, which I flatly refused. On reference to the captain, my contention was practically supported, though he reprimanded me severely for my words, in order I suppose, to let the mate down easy.

The mate having now exhausted his official dodges, while I had become quite sailor enough to do my duty and know my rights, a final settlement became a necessity for the mate, who was bound as chief officer, to maintain his authority. The occasion was not long in coming. Some short answer of mine having excited his ire, he came for me with an iron belaying-pin snatched from the rail, and though I warned him I would kill him if he struck me, he being possessed with the idea that all Yankees were braggarts and cowards, disregarded the notice, whereupon I cut him across the body with my belt knife, which was not sharp, or my promise would have been made good, then and there. Nevertheless, as I put my strength in the blow, he was badly hurt and disabled for the time. After the skipper had swabbed him off and tied him up, he sent for me and gave me the pleasing information that he was about to put me in irons and hand me over to the admiral at Callao to be taken to England for trial. I asked him if he thought

I could get away from the ship, or if he thought he could navigate her any better without me, or if he had ever had any fault to find with me, or had ever known me to have a bad word with anyone but the mate? To all of which he freely answered in the negative, like an honest man as he was, and even admitted that personally he had no fault to find with me. He had, I believe, rather a private fondness for me, especially since an occasion not long before, when I had succeeded in taking the weather earing from the carpenter in reefing topsails; he finally agreed to dispense with the irons, and as the mate recovered, in course of time everything quieted down, with the understanding that the matters between the mate and me were to be settled at some future convenient opportunity on shore. The *Change* was a slow, old-fashioned sailer, about five or six knots being all that could be got out of her with a fair wind and lee studding sails. Owing to this and our scanty crew, with the captain's consequent prudence about 'carrying on,' the voyage was long and tedious. Provisions got scarce in quantity and variety and the skipper determined to touch for wild hogs at the Isle de Cocas, a solitary, uninhabited island lying in about five degrees north latitude, a few hundred miles off the coast of Central America.

This island is about nine miles long, with half as much width or less, and almost entirely mountainous. On the weather side the land slopes by apparently accessible declivities toward the sea, but on the lee side it presents a lofty precipitous face, over which at that season a number of lovely cascades, 'half concealed, half disclosed' by the dense tropical vegetation, fall many hundred feet into the sea. On the same side, the mouth of a creek, quite large for so small an island, became visible, apparently affording opportunity for landing through the moderate surf. As we dare not let go the anchor, in consequence of the inability of all hands to weigh it, sail was shortened, and my friend the mate and myself were left to work the ship on and off, while the captain landed with all the rest of the crew. They were absent all day, finding plenty of pig tracks but no pigs. They however shot plenty of large fowl, and made a good haul of fish in the mouth of the creek. During their absence the ship was absolutely cov-

ered with hundreds of sea fowl—mostly boobies—who covered the spars, rail, booms, and every rope on which they could find footing, while other myriads hovered round the ship. They had no fear of us, biting viciously when handled, and roughly fighting each other for standing-room. A turtle several feet long, floated by just awash with the surface, which we watched with greedy eyes, but had no means of capturing, being just out of reach with the harpoon.

The island lies far out of the track of vessels and has been rarely visited. It was discovered by Anson or some other of the early navigators of these seas, who according to our skipper's chart, left on it pigs, goats and fowls. It seems from the sea a lovely spot, and from its heavy mantle of vegetation must possess a fertile soil, notwithstanding the picturesque inequality of its surface. Somewhat after the time of this visit, its name became well known in San Francisco from the following tale told by a Dr. M. of Illinois. That gentleman in trying to make his way to California by way of Central America lodged one night at a native's cabin in Costa Rica, the owner of which lay dying. The doctor, moved by the distress of the family, remained caring for him during several days, when he died, but not before presenting his benefactor with a rude chart of the weather side of the Isle de Cocas and the following statement:

One of the ancestors of the dying man had been an English seaman who was captured in the Pacific by pirates, whom he was induced or compelled to join. Off Acapulco they lay in wait for and seized a Spanish treasure galleon bound for the Philippines, in which a vast quantity of government, church, and private valuables had been shipped in consequence of a panic caused either by the destruction of Panama or some other depredations of the buccaneers. That treasure which was contained in some twenty casks and boxes, had been deposited by the pirates on the weather side of the Isle de Cocas, in the bed of a torrent temporarily diverted from its course for the purpose. Before they had any opportunity to reclaim it, their vessel was destroyed by an English cruiser after a desperate contest, in which the pirate was sunk with most of her crew, the few survivors being taken.

These were ultimately carried to England, tried, convicted, and hung in London, partly on the evidence of the sailor in question, who was pardoned to serve as 'King's evidence.' Falling into poverty, he afterwards endeavored to make his way back to the island by the way of Central America, but being without friends or money, stuck fast in that country, where he at length married, settled, and in due course died, leaving a written statement and such a rude chart as he was capable of making, which thus now came through his descendant into Dr. M.'s possession. The latter finally made his way to San Francisco after a two or three years' journey from Illinois. There he soon interested some acquaintances in the story, whose romantic character was not ill adapted to find converts among that adventurous population. These caused application to be made to the proper English records from which it was ascertained that such a piratical craft was really captured about that time and place, four of whose crew were actually tried, convicted and executed in London.

This confirmation of the exile's tale reached San Francisco about the year 1855 or '56, and came near setting the bay on fire with excitement. As I was the only person there, or probably for that matter, in the whole United States, who had ever seen the island, that fact soon got out, and I was able at least to inform the numerous anxious inquirers that such a place existed and the beds of its picturesque and tumbling torrents were well fitted for such a place of deposit. A corporation was organized with beautifully printed certificates of stock, the schooner *Julius Pringle* chartered, and a numerous and hopeful body of explorers went down in her to find the treasure and make their fortunes. As always seems to be the case in such enterprises, they found everything just as described—except the treasure—which they were obliged to come back without, after all their stores and provisions were exhausted. I have heard that the search has since been several times renewed by other parties, but without success.

On board the *Change*, the mate and myself were not sorry to see the return of the captain and crew, for as the round-bodied and bluff-bowed old barque would not look within seven points of

the wind, any sudden freshening of the latter might have sent us off to leeward much faster than the boat could follow. It was indeed not very long after the island visit that two events occurred showing that even in the steady monotony of the 'trades,' and with the most sober and well-behaved old craft, the ocean is nowhere and never without its occasions of excitement and adventure. The first was the advent, with barely a few minutes notice, of a severe white squall which, preceded by an ominous lull in the regular trade wind, came up from the leeward about eight bells in the evening, with tremendous violence, very nearly taking the ship aback with studding sails set. The squall brought with it a dense pall of almost inconceivable darkness, rent by nearly continuous lightning, and discharged torrents of rain that seemed to fall in sheets rather than drops. Notwithstanding there had been time to haul down most of the kites, let go halliards and haul up clews, the ship was instantly knocked down, and must certainly have filled and foundered, but for the seamanlike prudence of Captain Franklin, who in consequence of the short crew, habitually kept all deck-openings closed and battened, except the forecandle scuttle and companion-way, the slides of which were nearly water tight. Fortunately, the sea was smooth and had no time to get up, and the lee foretopmast studding-sail with one of the head sails having got adrift, floated off to leeward and towed the ship's head in that direction, so that after a time she was got before the wind and righted, affording a chance to stow sails and repair damages. During the height of the scrimmage, as I and one of the boys were trying to haul down a studding-sail by the tack, the latter suddenly parted on the bowsprit cleat, and the free end struck the captain—who was rushing to help us—in the face, knocking him down to leeward, where he would certainly have gone overboard but for striking against a man secured to the fiferail, who was engaged in slacking off the sheet of the same sail, and pinned him just in time. He carried about a fine pair of black eyes for a while, but in view of such a lucky accident, scarcely had reason to complain.

The other event was the occasion of a splendid act of heroism on the part of my enemy, the mate, who, whatever his other faults,

was no coward. The ship was at the time hove to in a moderate gale and long heavy sea-way, under close reefed main topsail and fore staysail, riding with great ease, though pitching head under to the heavy seas, when the jib gasket was washed loose or parted and the sail went adrift. As some of its tackle still held, the effect was that the loose sail would ride up to the boom at every pitch, and as each sea struck and filled it, would drift off to leeward bringing up with a tremendous jerk that must soon carry away the jib stay and boom, which in turn would probably wreck the fore-topmast or worse. The seas were long, and the ship's pitches deep, easy and regular, but notwithstanding she was only in ballast, there was so much water on deck it was scarcely safe to go forward of the mainmast. Nevertheless, someone must go out on the boom and cut loose or secure the sail. Several of the watch were hanging to the weather-rail as near the scene as it was safe to go, shouting their views into each other's ears through the deafening noise of wind and water, and all eyes turned on the carpenter, by common consent the best and bravest sailor on board. That seaman, recognizing the cogency of 'noblesse oblige' was already stripping for the job, when the mate came running forward, ordered the carpenter to the bowsprit cleat, to handle the running rigging if required, and taking one of the men's knives in his teeth, rushed out on the boom. There he worked a considerable time, hampered by the inky darkness and carried under water at every pitch of the ship, but in spite of all obstacles stuck to it, and not only removed the immediate danger, but with the carpenter's help, saved the sail. He came in at last much exhausted and half-drowned, and was assisted by the men aft to the captain, who threw his arms around his neck, as every one of the crew would have liked to do. This act of fine seamanship and splendid gallantry, well illustrates the value of the English system of maritime apprenticeship, as then and perhaps still prevailing, and the fine seamen that it breeds. The captain, mate and carpenter had all been apprentices to the large ship-owning firm to which the *Change* belonged, and they with the two boys had stuck by and saved the ship for its owners, even in the confusion of San Francisco, where the remainder of the crew had run

away. When the present round voyage should be completed, the skipper would probably get a larger or better ship, and the others a step in promotion, or an increase of wages; all fully looking forward to spending their lives in the same service, with certain advancement, according to the records they might make.

It was somewhere near the Galipagos, off the coast of Ecuador, and during a dead calm, that we drifted down on the first sail seen since sinking the lofty heads of San Francisco, which proved to be the ship *Sea Queen*, of Dundee. Her captain came aboard of us, and we forecastle men learned from the boat's crew that the *Queen* was last from Panama—where she had landed a cargo of English coal—which place was thronged by thousands of Americans willing to pay any price for passage to San Francisco. This information was too much for the equanimity of our skipper, who, doubtless having plenty of discretion from his owners, forthwith determined to break the articles we had all signed and run for the golden shower.

Accordingly our helm was put down for Panama, and after getting clear of the trades, we had a long and weary beat against light and baffling breezes to that place, which we reached after a seventy-three days' passage from San Francisco, anchoring several miles from the town. Panama at that time remained very much in the condition it had maintained for centuries. All land is beautiful to the seaman who sees it from the deck of his vessel after a long voyage, where nothing had been visible but sea and sky, but pristine Panama had a beauty and loveliness of its own. The grey medieval masonry of the fort and town, embowered in tropical foliage, and backed by the picturesque mountains of the Isthmus—the whole seen across the fine bay with its islands, vessels and native craft—was irresistibly attractive to eyes which for months had wandered idly over the weary expanse of an almost untraversed ocean.

There was no man-of-war in the harbor, of the English or any other nation, which fact gave me a certain sense of security against the entertainment the skipper had threatened me with, notwithstanding I had always expected his good nature to prevail in the end. Nevertheless, as he went ashore at daybreak every

morning for several days, during which time we were all kept on board, and as pride, policy and etiquette alike forbade me to ask questions, conscience compelled me to feel some uneasiness about what fate he might be preparing for me. The skipper's habit—as is usual in that climate—was to go ashore early and return before noon, but one day he remained absent till late, when he came off with several new men just shipped, and at once sent for me to his cabin. I had a genuine respect and affection for the 'old man,' and never did really believe he was going to be very hard with me, and his first words removed all doubt. He had made a fine charter of the ship to carry some hundreds of American passengers to San Francisco at either \$200, or \$300, per head—I cannot now remember which—but the aggregate several times exceeded the entire value of the barque. A gang of carpenters were coming off in the morning to fit bunks and other necessities, after which the vessel would haul in to the watering-place at Tobago to load water and provisions. Though seamen were plenty in Panama, I could have plenty of shore 'leave' and then go back to San Francisco with him at the same wages, or if I preferred, I should be discharged and paid off the next day.

Now as an English man-of-war might heave in sight any day, and there might be others to complain of me besides the captain, I preferred anything which would set me on shore, and out of their reach in the shortest time, so the skipper, not overmuch pleased as I thought, at the rejection of his offer, told me to be ready to go ashore with him to the consignees at eight bells (four o'clock) next morning to be paid off. Promptly at that hour I was waiting for him at the gangway, the mate engaged with the new hands washing down decks, when the captain appeared in his patent leathers and white flannels, and ordered me into the boat. But it was not in unregenerate human nature to miss the last opportunity of giving the mate a piece of my mind in presence of the new hands, which I proceeded to do, daring him to come on shore while the ship lay in port. Immediate collision was prevented by the captain, who hurried me over the gangway and down the ladder, the mate promising to pay me all the visits I wanted on shore.

After a three-mile pull to the postern, I accompanied my skipper to the office of Zachrisson Nelson and Company, the ship's agents, who had the account and pay prepared for my actual time on board. That I refused to receive, and the captain with several mercantile aristocrats, was called from the sacred retreat of the inner counting-room to settle the row between me and the clerks. Knowing nothing at that time of my actual legal rights in the premises, I thought the sure thing would be to ask enough, so my modest request included additional wages for the estimated length of voyage from Panama to Iquique, passage money to the latter place, and my board in Panama till a vessel should be ready for Iquique. Such cheek from a foremast Jack, I suppose had never before been heard in the British marine and nearly took the skipper's breath away, while his aristocratic friends were so shocked they nearly fainted from sympathy.

In the presence of the commercial great men, his friends, he was at first disposed for some British bluff, loud and strong, but on being reminded that that settled nothing, wanted to know if he had not let me off from a prison offence and always stood my friend? I replied I had nothing to complain of against him, but when I had to lick the mate for abusing me as the only American on board, he threatened to send me to England in irons. "Now," proceeded I, warming up as I went on, "you can't do that, for there is no man-of-war here, and if there were, the place is full of Americans. I saw 500 of them in coming along the street. If my claim is not legal, I don't want it, but if it is, I need it worse than you do. There is no use in wrangling over it. I will just take a little walk and inquire of some lawyer whether I am entitled to it or not."

Now, I suppose there is nothing afloat or ashore—not even a pirate—which a shipmaster hates and fears as much as a lawyer. Any controversy with them, especially with the rascally sailors' pettifoggers who infest ports and ships, involves a libel, bonds, detention, loss and expenses without end, in which all the pecuniary responsibility is confined to one side, and even success brings almost equal loss. So after giving my commander time to cool, with a few innocent hints at such blessings in reserve for him, he

compromised by paying about three-fourths of my demand and I bade him a respectful good-bye. I have never seen or heard of him since. He was a brave, skillful and prudent seaman, a fairly good shipmaster, and no owners ever had a more faithful representative.

Having got clear of the ship and of British justice, which though it has the reputation of being a good article, one may get too much of, the next thing in order was to have a settlement with the mate. Since his gallant conduct at sea, I cannot say I hated him, notwithstanding the numerous wrongs I had suffered at his hands, but at that foolish period of life, I had, as is not unusual, a natural tendency toward unprofitable controversy, and rankling with a sense of unjust treatment, would have cheerfully paid down the whole of my hard-earned wages, if necessary, rather than miss a chance to meet my enemy face to face in fair and honest battle. Having no acquaintances in the place, I adopted poor Jack's only resource in a strange port, and made my way to the sailors' boarding-houses, where I soon fell upon a choice lot of sea-faring men, embracing half the deserters, beach-combers, and sea lawyers on the Pacific, both English and American, all unanimous for a row with a mate or any other lawful authority.

At that time, the new commercial town since grown up around the steamer landings and railroad terminus had no existence. The old town was surrounded by its ancient wall with a long and high sea face, at one end of which was the castle or fort, and at the other, an open paved square used as a marketplace with a postern or water-gate known as the 'sally-port,' from which a short flight of steps led to the water. Here the pongys or market boats landed their cargoes long before daylight, and later the place was used by the various ships' boats to land their skippers, stewards and other officials. It was guarded by a sentinel and a few others were posted about the market square, there being no other soldiers nearer than the guardhouse, or the fort, still more distant. A scheme was soon arranged, to await my mate's arrival every morning from daybreak, at the sally-port, with details which will presently appear. My enthusiastic friends were for jumping on him promiscuously, but that I positively vetoed, not so much, I

fear, for fairness' sake, as for its inadequacy to settle the personal issue. I sent off a daily message to the mate by the *Change's* boat and have no doubt he would have been prompt enough unless restrained by the skipper. At all events, it was not till after several mornings that he at last appeared in charge of the ship's boat. The moment he entered the sally-port in advance of his boat's crew, the gate was slammed to and fastened behind him, a sailor knocked down the negro sentinel with one blow, while another broke his musket and hove it over the wall. The mate understood perfectly these little preliminaries, and immediately began to strip, I being already in shirt and trousers. As far as I remember, not a word passed between us, the heavy business commencing without delay. The sailors quickly made and held a ring, outside of which soon gathered a big crowd of market negroes highly excited and delighted at the white men's shindy.

After a good deal of sparring, with more or less superficial damage given and received, finding that my antagonist could take any amount of pounding and wait, I concluded it was best for my interests to get him down; so, watching my opportunity as he was recovering from an overreach, I gave him a head butt and went down with him, taking care to fall on top. Here we inflicted considerable mutual damage, he still endeavoring to disable me with his fists, and I trying to get hold of his head to beat it on the ground, both having a fair amount of success. The result was yet uncertain, when I felt myself suddenly dragged off and was told to run, and caught sight, amid a general flight of the negro spectators, of a platoon of black soldiers charging down with fixed bayonets.

I soon concealed myself by dodging among the market people, who helped me wash off and repair damages, so that about the only man arrested, was my late antagonist who certainly was not much to blame, and was soon allowed to go. He might have set his consul and consignees on me, but did not, and I have never seen or heard of him since. He was a brave man and a gallant seaman, and I do not believe he likes the Yankees any less after fighting them a little. Doubtless he has since sailed his own ship on many seas, and if still living is enjoying a well-earned

competence in some one of those remote British seaports where the retired British skipper loves to seek a quiet anchorage in his latter days.

The width neither of the streets nor of the adjacent mule tracks in the old town admitting of wheeled vehicles, there was not then one in Panama. Everything was transported on the backs of mules or men, and as the former were scarce and in great demand for the transisthmian traffic, the latter were the approved intramural beasts of burden. As I could speak a little Spanish and rapidly increased my knowledge, I got together a gang of *cargadores* and did the principal transporting business within the walls for merchants and others, till everything was thrown into confusion by the celebrated American riots. Though bad feeling and personal collisions had previously occurred, the immediate occasion of the riots was the lighting of his cigar by some dare-devil, on a bet, from a candle on the high altar of the Cathedral Church of San Juan de Dios, during the most solemn moment of the mass, when fifty priests were officiating before a congregation of 3000 people devoutly on their knees. I saw that outrageous act, and I regret to say did nothing to discourage it, for which I have no excuse to give but the reckless and stupid folly of youth. There were but few Americans present, who were collected at one of the principal doors, and who fled when, after a moment of horror at the sacrilege, the whole congregation, priests and all, went savagely for them. After considerable desultory fighting, the Americans gradually got themselves concentrated on two streets of massive stone houses, whence they sallied to sack and destroy the *cabildo* or guard house, and to which they returned when hard pressed, keeping the street clear by pistol fire. After a week or more of this disorder and some loss of life to both parties, in which of course the negroes were the principal sufferers, a large body of troops was assembled near to but outside of the town, and the authorities, not relishing the job of getting the Americans out of their stone houses, were induced by the foreign merchants, consuls and others to make peace with amnesty.

I suppose most sensible persons will agree with my present view; i.e., that while the mass may be a puerile and trifling baby

play, with a tendency to sacrilege, yet unpardonable is the ass who, because he thinks he knows better, dares deliberately to insult the solemn and harmless convictions of others possessing equal rights with himself.

My transporting business being destroyed by this bloody episode, I took to speculating in steamer tickets with profitable results. The condition of affairs which made this sort of gambling possible was as follows: The new steamer lines from the east to San Francisco being able to load any number of vessels for cash freights and passage to Chagres, dispatched round the Cape to Panama a wholly inadequate number of vessels for service on the Pacific side. The sea voyage from New York round the Cape to Panama is several times longer than from the same place to Chagres, besides which the distance from Panama to San Francisco is nearly double that from New York to Chagres so that on any reasonable calculation the steamers intended to ply from Panama should have been dispatched a month before those destined to Chagres, and twice as many steamers were required for the Pacific as for the Atlantic service. But no such honest precautions were pursued. All were received at New York who could pay the cash, and the natural result was that a great number of cheated and deceived passengers congregated at Panama, among whom poverty, pestilence and death ran fatal riot. Hundreds of these deluded victims idled their days on the ramparts looking anxiously for arriving steamers whose smoky banners were discernible at many hours' distance. If on such appearance the old salts—of whom there were plenty—pronounced her to be, for instance, the steamer A, the tickets held for that vessel rose in market price to \$1000 and upwards, while those for steamers B, C and D correspondingly fell to a fifth of that price or less, notwithstanding these might arrive next day. This was gambling, of course, of much less respectable character than if the subject had been stocks or bonds, which latter, as we all know, are permitted to the most pious and exemplary moralists, but the circumstances of my debut in Panama were not such as to entangle me in fine distinctions, and I became much interested in it and was quite lucky, having at one time got ahead about \$5000 in gold sovereigns. While this

comparative wealth lasted, I was a popular character with my seafaring acquaintances, whom I treated liberally, and might have had the command of any of the several desperate enterprises then projected. One of these, I remember, was the purchase or seizure—the parties were not particular which—of a schooner, getting a lot of negroes on board at Taboga (the neighboring island where all vessels then took aboard their water) shutting the hatches on them, and landing them to plant coffee at some such out-of-the-way place as the Isle de Cocas. But all such schemes were fortunately cut short by the loss of my entire capital one unlucky night at the well-known Monte tables of G. & F., at the corner of the Calle de San Juan de Dios and the Grand Plaza.¹⁰

¹⁰ To illustrate the ups and downs then and there common to all, it may be added that G. who had been a well-known Mississippi steamboat captain, afterward became, successively, a banker, steamship agent and capitalist in San Francisco; then went into railroads in New York and died but a few years since, leaving an estate commonly rated at over twenty millions. F. also became a prosperous San Francisco banker and money-lender, but I believe has been dead for many years.

CHAPTER VIII

LAND AND SEA JOURNEYINGS

The morning after such injudicious bucking on an inferior 'layout,' I found myself absolutely penniless, and when I and my beach-combing followers got sufficiently hungry, there was nothing left for us but to ship at \$40 a month on a Spanish schooner called *La Favorita*, bound and all 'ataunto' for the coast of Central America for mules, then in active demand for travel on the Isthmus. This I proceeded to do. *La Favorita*, notwithstanding her name, was a played-out, rotten old tub, ill-fitted and ill-found, commanded by a drunken Spaniard who, when he was not asleep, divided his time with impartiality between swilling rum and praying to an old, painted, wooden saint, nailed up in his cabin. He had an English mate who was a fine seaman when sober, which was never, when he could get access to the skipper's rum. The crew was ample in number, mostly of English and American deserters and 'beach-combers,' including several first-class English man-of-war's men, and had they been under any adequate discipline or command, would have made such a crew of A. B.'s as a trading schooner does not often get in any part of the world.

Keeping inshore of the 'trades' after getting clear of the gulf (the wind was almost always light and generally ahead), by making long tacks to sea and short ones on shore, the skipper managed to see the coast pretty often and pick up a few mules at nearly all accessible points along shore from San Jose to Realejo.¹¹ But as most of the towns and haciendas were in the interior, and nearly all their ports were exposed and bad, while

¹¹ Now, I believe, called 'Corintos.'

our ground tackle was extremely worthless, we often had to cut and run before we could get either mules or water. The method of loading mules was primitive. A small lot would be swum off, frequently a mile or more, by natives in pongys and canoes. Arrived alongside, frequently accompanied by a school of the small ground shark which infests those waters, our men with poles and boat hooks would slip the slings around the mules and hook on, when they were quickly run up by the men on deck, with a double whip purchase. Until the mules' legs were clear of the water, the fight with the sharks was incessant, mules, sailors and natives making common cause against the enemy, who, nevertheless occasionally got in some sharp nips.

Owing to our few and leaky water casks, we were nearly always short of water for the mules, though as it rained nearly every day, a great deal was caught in old sails. How the wretched old tub ever succeeded in making her round voyage back to Panama, is certainly hard to explain or account for. There was absolutely nothing sound and whole on board, from the old hull itself, down to her fished booms, rotten rigging, patched sails, and spliced hempen cable. As for the running rigging, it was as much as a man's life was worth to trust his weight when aloft to a stay, halyard or tack, so that the light sails were rarely set in wind from any quarter. Nevertheless, she brought a fair cargo of thirsty and starving mules into Panama, the profit on which must have exceeded many times the entire value of the vessel.

Safely back in Panama, after an opportunity for some sound reflection on recent events, I found myself somewhat ashamed of my indifferent surroundings, and cut the whole concern in an effectual manner by shipping immediately, while I still had money in my pocket, on the American *S. S. Columbus*—Captain Peck—as a foremast hand, for San Francisco, claiming and receiving the wages of an A. B. The steamer had been built at Philadelphia to carry perhaps a hundred passengers of both classes between that city and Charleston, South Carolina. By filling her entire between-decks and building four rows of standees, three bunks high, on her spar deck, 1100 passengers were crowded into her, with whom she sailed on her voyage of 3500 miles.

I believe I have never seen such a jam before or since. The spar deck having for the most part no covering except an awning for fine weather, most of the passengers were entirely exposed to the open sky, and dependent for health and comfort on whatever weather Providence might see fit to send. It is true they were all young men in search of adventure, covered with knives and pistols and thinking themselves hardy and dangerous desperadoes, till a few knock-downs from the cross and crowded sailors, taught them better manners. The ship's officers and crew were first-class, but in such a crowd it was almost impossible to hear or obey orders, and it is terrible to conjecture what a catastrophe any really heavy weather must have produced.

But though we enjoyed fine weather throughout the voyage, with little wind and less rain, the thoughtless crowd was, nevertheless, destined to pay dearly for the avarice of the agents or charter party who had so abused and exceeded the capacity of the vessel. We had scarcely dropped the headlands of the deep gulf of Panama and got clear of the land, when the 'coast fever'—which is, I believe, pretty much the same as 'yellow Jack'—broke out, venomous and deadly from the beginning, and the scenes on deck soon beggared description. Within two or three days the crowded spar deck was full of cases, nearly all delirious and necessarily lashed down in their bunks by the crew, who otherwise might as well have abandoned the ship. The vessel was soon a howling bedlam constantly increased by fresh victims, who usually became delirious and tried to jump overboard at an early stage. On the third or fourth day, Captain Peck, a fine old Philadelphia seaman, got the ship's hands on the forecastle—it being impracticable to call them aft—and talked to us like a father. He said he had learned from much experience that the disease attacked those who were most afraid of it. That though the passengers had lost their heads from panic, he felt he had a good crew with no cowards, and could save every one of us if we would trust him and obey all orders implicitly and intelligently, notwithstanding the difficulty of getting about the ship, and the impossibility of a proper superintendence of the watches by the officers. But for humanity's sake, we must all, officers men and

alike, do many things we did not ship for, such as looking after the sick, separating and disposing of the dead, restoring the spirits of passengers, etc. He would have no more formal funerals with tolling of the ship's bell, etc. Each watch coming on deck was to sew up the dead in their bedding and heave them quietly overboard under supervision of the officer of the watch.

This conference had an immediate and excellent effect on the crew, who were not in the least scared, or if they were, did not admit it, but who had felt ugly and disposed to rebel at their unusual difficulties and hardships, and especially at the difficulty of the usual communication with the officers and each other. About this time the captain mustered both watches and under his personal supervision, had all the delirious and noisy patients carried forward to the ship's head, where such cases were thenceforth promptly brought, secured in their bunks, and kept till they were dead or quiet. This was probably the best single measure adopted to allay the panic and consequent spread of the disease among the mass of passengers. Those worst cases were constantly attended by Mrs. Hagler, a cabin passenger from Texas, and the ship's chambermaid, who belonged in Philadelphia, but whose name I am very sorry I cannot remember. These were, I think, the only females on board, and not a sailor seeing their voluntary and devoted labors, hesitated to respond to their calls and render them every aid in his power. Mrs. H., who was the widow of a Texas ranger, had learned in Texas to deal with yellow fever by what she called the 'Raspail method,' and no doubt saved many lives, though, of course, the most engrossing labor of two middle-aged women could not go very far in such a crowd of frightened, sick and dying men.

I never knew and I do not believe that after formal funerals were dispensed with any account was kept of the number of deaths, but they must have amounted to a hundred and probably more. Fortunately the weather was almost uniformly good, and off the Gulf of California we began to encounter a sensibly cooler temperature, under the influence of which the disease rapidly diminished both in the number and violence of attacks. The voyage occupied, as I remember, about thirty-four days, and

scarcely half a dozen had to be carried ashore on stretchers at San Francisco. To the best of my recollection, both officers and crew were exempt from first to last, showing the effective prophylactic influence of hard work and fearless minds.

An astonishing transformation had already taken place in San Francisco. The gigantic mudholes in Montgomery and other streets had been filled up and planked, and even the unwonted luxury of sidewalks of the same material had begun to make their appearance, though as no two premises had adopted the same level, and there were no street lights, traveling by night was still attended with difficulties, especially as a principal evening amusement consisted in shooting from the doorways at the multitudes of rats which lived in security under the planking, and depredated in and out of the wooden store-houses at pleasure. Wharves, constructed on piling, were pushing out into the bay, by means of which passengers and freight could be landed at many places directly from vessels instead of from small boats and lighters. A crowd of vessels of all nations lay at anchor in front of the city, many of them abandoned or used as storage hulks. Some comparatively substantial frame houses of two and even three stories had been built, and in many other respects the city began to give indications of its speedy growth and royal future.

As I was illy versed in city ways, I had now to consider whether I should again repair to the mines or adopt the sea as a profession. I had not passed several months at sea without learning something, and felt quite competent for a position abaft the mast even in a square rigger, and might have had a mate's berth in a small trading-schooner then fitting for a voyage to the Marquesas for hogs and poultry. But notwithstanding the hundreds of square rigged vessels from all quarters of the world which filled the harbor, very few were able to get away or were worth the expense of moving, and on such the few vacancies for officers were filled by virtue of eastern influence or acquaintance. As idleness did not suit my temperament or pocket, I concluded to try my luck in the mines again, and repairing to Stockton, invested my savings and credit in mules and started out with a small pack train to the Mokelumne mines. My first trips were fairly successful. But as

the competition in the southern mines of Mexican packers, and of the wagon routes constantly being opened, must evidently soon reduce prices of transportation to wagon rates, I turned my thoughts to other and newer portions of the country.

As much excitement then prevailed respecting the mines in the extreme north of California, I conveyed my mules to San Francisco, and shipped them, with a lot of staple merchandise, for which I obtained a partial credit, on board the Scotch *S.S. Eudora*, Barkman master, bound with a large freight and passenger list to Trinidad Head, a landing point below the mouth of the Klamath, from which it was believed the coast mountains could be successfully crossed to the then little known mines situated on the upper Klamath, Trinity, Salmon and Shasta and their several tributaries. The *Eudora* was a barque rigged screw, and a large vessel for those days, with a tonnage of probably 1500 or thereabout. Her hull was sound, but her engines, standing and running rigging, and all her furniture and fittings were in bad condition, few repairs being then possible at San Francisco. She carried about thirty cabin passengers, with 600, including myself and Mexicans, in the steerage, to whom was assigned the entire between-decks fore and aft. Her hold was well-filled with provisions, water in casks and cargo, and her entire spar deck forward of the cabin houses was occupied by hay in bales, and a large number of mules, for whose safety at sea little preparation had been made beyond scantlings lashed fore and aft over each rail to tie them up by. There were no stalls, deck cleats or any other of the ordinary safeguards usually adopted for transporting livestock by sea. Between the long ranks of mules, almost the entire deck space outside the hatch combings, was occupied by water casks, bales of hay, and barrels of provisions, with little or no precaution as to storage, lashing and security in case of bad weather.

I by no means liked the bad order and general unseaworthy appearance of ship and cargo; but as the voyage was short and there appeared no other present way of reaching my destination, I was induced to take the risk of good weather. We had scarcely cleared the harbor, however, before it came on to blow fresh from the N. and N. W. and in a day or two the wind had increased to a heavy

gale from the same quarter with a head sea, against which the ship could make no progress. Of course this worked havoc on the deckload of mules, who lost their footing and trampled each other, while the unsecured and miscellaneous trash on deck, rolling backward and forward athwart ship, pounded them to death. The decks were cleared by heavy boarding seas which carried away the rails and swept off all loose material. On the fourth day out, the ship laboring heavily in a rough head sea, the long steerage table just set for dinner broke away in a heavy lurch, and no attempt being made either by the steward's crew or the sick passengers to clear away the wreck, the between-decks was thenceforth adorned with broken crockery, smashed tableware and miscellaneous cutlery, which soon became churned up with mule dung and sea water to a general depth of about a foot. The hatches could not be battened on such a crowd without suffocating them, so a quarter-section of each was left open, down which poured occasional cascades, well-charged with all sorts of unspeakable rubbish from the upper deck, until that was at last swept clean by the breaching seas. As wind and sea increased, while every thing below was sickening and disgusting, the scene on deck, where none but a sailor could venture, was soon appalling.

The captain being drunk or incompetent, few or no attempts had been made to repair damages. Remnants of sails and broken running-rigging were flying out to leeward, the deck forward of the quarter-deck was a wreck, and the main topsail chain halyard having parted, together with its port lift, the heavy yard hung for a while by the other lift with a hundred feet or more of the broken chain, the whole sweeping the deck from side to side, smashing something at every roll of the ship. Finding steerage-way mostly lost and the vessel falling off more and more frequently into the trough of the sea, the captain still invisible on deck, I sought the mate E.¹² (a good seaman from Philadelphia, who afterwards commanded one of the most celebrated clipper ships in the New York, California and China trade). Finding I was a sea-faring man he informed me confidentially that one engine was broken

¹² Nicholas Essling.

down, and the other geared to a pump of large capacity which barely held the water at a stand. The quantity of water in the hold and the rate it was making, indicated considerable leakage beside the quantity coming on deck and through the hatches. Should it reach the fires, or the engine break down, the ship must founder directly. I asked E. what was the matter with the captain, and why, with so many lives at stake, they did not repair or cut away the wreck aloft, and make sail enough to get the ship about, and run off the wind for Monterey or any other leeward port she could make? He intimated the captain was drunk and cross as the result of a row with me a day or two before, and insulted him every time he made any proposals respecting the condition of the vessel.

My difficulty with the skipper had been about as follows: Exasperated at the wretched management and my own loss of property, I had driven away the barkeeper and cleared out a small deckhouse used as a barroom, throwing the contents overboard, nailing cleats on the deck, and packing the place full with four of my best mules—spiking up the door and cutting a hole on the lee side to admit food and water. About the time I had finished the job, the captain appeared, pistol in hand, demanding loudly to know “who had done that.” I stood by and said nothing, though quite resolved to stand by my work. As no one replied, he called the mate and watch, and ordered them to clear the place. My time having now arrived, I warned the mate I would kill the first man that touched my property, and told the captain that as it was going to be a dangerous job, he had better try to be man enough to undertake it himself. I drew no weapons, though I had them convenient, but watched B.’s movements closely, fully resolved to kill him if he raised his weapon or meddled with the mules, which were the last ones surviving on the ship. As the mate and watch sympathized with me and did not care to risk their lives in the captain’s quarrel, they stood quietly by, when he commenced storming at the mate for a Yankee coward, telling him, with plenty of coarse and obscene language, that I dared not shoot. At last I lost my temper, a dangerous thing to do when weapons are out, and walking up to the captain, ordered him to

pocket his pistols and clear out "before I counted three," fairly running him off his own deck.

As the passengers took no trouble to conceal their approval of that episode, and the Scotchman suspected his officers and crew of the same feeling, I don't wonder he was cross, though that was a poor excuse for keeping full of rum and letting the vessel with seven hundred lives go to destruction, without one effort to get her before the wind. The gale continued with severity—though I have seen worse—and the condition of the ship and people constantly became less and less endurable, till after about six days of it the mate and chief engineer told me they were satisfied the engine would not last through the next night, in which case the ship must go down. The only boat left on board was a surf boat belonging to some passengers, which was capsized and lashed solidly to ring bolts on deck, and in case of sudden disaster must be swamped and lost in the rush of so many hundreds. They therefore proposed, as soon as it should fall dark, with certain good men of the crew to cut it loose and try to launch it overboard and make for the nearest land, supposed to be not very distant, and invited me to join them. Apart from moral objections, there were other difficulties about this project. No preparation of the boat or its most necessary implements and stores could be made without exciting a general alarm. If she could be launched from the deck without damage, which was very doubtful, she would almost certainly be swamped or stove before getting clear of the ship, and even if the land could be reached, it was inhabited only by hostile Indians whose reception would probably be worse than shipwreck. Thus, even if we should bring ourselves to seize upon the only chance of escape for all these hundreds, it remained very uncertain whether our position and chances would really be improved. Hence I proposed the alternative of taking the ship from the captain, and getting her before the wind for any leeward port she might be able to make under canvas.

The two officers declined to take any active part in the scheme, but if the passengers could be worked up to it, would offer no resistance, and fully agreed with me there was no other chance in sight for saving ship and passengers. Upon going among the

seasick and frightened people in the steerage, and stating the real condition of affairs, it was soon apparent they would agree to anything that offered a change from the wretched present, provided someone else would take the responsibility and do the work. A short penciled petition was therefore prepared and signed by a number, asking the captain to put the ship about and run to some port to leeward or even beach the ship if necessary, while still possible to save so many lives. Meanwhile I was called to a cabin stateroom, where lay three incensed Texans, savage, disheveled and seasick. These were David E. Terry, who became, in after years, Chief Justice of the State, his brother William, and Dr. Ashe, formerly of North Carolina. Like myself, having lost all the property they had brought on board, they were in a burning rage amusingly mixed up with seasickness. "Now," said T., "we don't know anything about ships and are awful sick, but not a bit frightened, and if you want to kill that d—d captain and all his crew, we are going to come in and take some chances with you. We may look pretty sick, and can't get up till the shooting begins, but when you are ready just call us, that's all."

The captain roughly declined to accede, on account of his insurance policies, and warming up as he proceeded, declared with oaths, that the ship was going to stay under his sole command; she had started, and was insured for Trinidad, and "by G—, was going to Trinidad or the bottom." Negotiation having failed, I so informed the crowd of steerage people and immediately put the question—"As many as are in favor of, and will help take the ship from the captain, say Aye." A shout of ayes came from the least seasick, and without putting the alternative, I called on as many as would or could, to follow, and rushing to T.'s stateroom, informed my Texan recruits that if they would promise not to shoot before I did, the fighting was ready to begin. Feeling a burning anxiety to sacrifice some one to the shades of their departed mules, even that onerous condition was accepted, and all three came rushing after me, pistols in hand, though not overlaid with other apparel.

Promptly kicking open the captain's outer door, I turned by a lucky chance to the left of the two staterooms he inhabited, and

clapped a pistol to his head as he was in the act of picking up his own. These I at once secured, and notwithstanding the difficulty, even with the aid of the narrow passageway, of keeping my too ardent supporters behind me, which was the only way of saving the rascal's life from their instant vengeance, I proceeded to lay down the law to the vanquished. Canvas was to be got on the ship to get her about and headed for the most northerly California port the wind might permit, San Francisco if possible, but if not, Monterey, or even San Luis Obispo. If the prisoner remained in his room he would not be maltreated, but if he came on deck or meddled with ship or crew he would be thrown overboard.

The active revolutionists were then mustered, and E., the mate, was ordered to take command, with the above instructions respecting the ship. If he accepted, his authority would be supported, if he refused, he was to be thrown overboard and the command offered to every officer successively, according to rank, with similar penalty. The matter was adjusted by E.'s acceptance, after protest that it was under "fear of his life."

Sail being made upon the foremast, the ship paid off handsomely and was safely, though after much risk, got before the wind, lee braces hauled taut, and all hands set at repairing rigging, and clearing the wreck. As luck would have it, the wind soon moderated, and hauling more to the westward, it was not more than two or three days till the ship was run into San Francisco with a fair wind, and safely beached on the flats off Rincon Point. When inside the heads, with the pilot in charge, Barkman emerged from his prison and marched up and down the quarter-deck, rifle in hand, to keep off the numerous shore boats which in those days thronged around arriving vessels to land passengers and baggage. His signals soon brought off two boatloads of marines from as many men-of-war lying in the harbor, one of which, if I remember rightly, was the *Cyane*. At this significant and unlooked-for apparition, the four principal malefactors, knowing the importance of getting ashore to have the first telling of the story, surreptitiously coaxed a bold boatman under the head, and sliding down a rope's end, got away in the fast-gathering darkness, just as the

man-of-war's boats hauled in to the after gangway. When the ringleaders were found missing, the aggrieved skipper lost his interest in the less guilty crowd, and after some hasty investigation by the officer of marines, they were allowed to go.

By a judicious division of labor, and the help of enthusiastic friends, we four interviewed the newspaper offices and got our story started on a correct basis. It is probable the ship's agents when they came to hear the whole story, thought the less fuss made the better. At all events, no attempts that I know of were ever made at arrest or prosecution, notwithstanding I went to the steamer next day with a scow and some friends, to recover my four mules. I had no difficulty about getting them, my friend the captain, being on shore, but on examination found them so terribly wounded and ulcerated by strains and salt water, that it must be a long time, if ever, before they could be fit for use. I therefore drove them up to the Plaza, where I auctioned them off for a trifling sum, the only salvage from the wreck of my humble fortunes on the ill-fated *Eudora*.

It was not till some years later that I resumed acquaintance with my three fellow 'pirates,' which was afterwards agreeably maintained for many years. David E. Terry became, as already stated, the first judicial officer of the State, resigning that position to fight a duel with the notorious Senator Broderick in 1859, and was at last murdered in a cowardly manner by a United States official. William was killed at the head of a Confederate cavalry regiment in the Civil War, and Ashe, as I have heard, died later in California. They all became honorable, upright and distinguished citizens, eminent and trustworthy in every relation of life, notwithstanding the animosities excited by the first named, near the close of his life, through some unfortunate errors of judgment in certain of his domestic affairs.

The supposed favorable position of Trinidad Head for communication with the interior—thus avoiding the long and rough land route from Sacramento, then dangerously infested by the Pitt River and other Indians—was at this time more than ever favorably regarded in San Francisco. No one there had ever seen it, or knew anything of its merits as a harbor, and still less the

practicability of its routes across the obstacles of the Coast Range. Nevertheless, the short distances represented on the worthless maps of that day, as separating it from the headwaters of the northern rivers, supposed to possess a numerous and prosperous mining population, so stirred the adventurous, that several sailing vessels of all dimensions were already up, or were quickly put up, for the place.

The condition of my finances no longer permitting me to aspire to a pack-train of mules, I effected a small loan from one of my recent Panama shipmates, and became the happy, but not proud, possessor of ten Mexican 'burros,' which I shipped, together with myself as sole man-of-all-work, on a small center-board schooner (name not remembered) of about eighty tons, bound again for Trinidad. How this small craft had got round either cape to the Pacific, I do not know, as I could learn nothing of her history. Almost anything, however, was considered fit for a California voyage in 1849, and though many such craft were never more heard of and left their bones on the bottom of far-off seas, some almost incredible voyages were successfully made. I remember seeing at Nye's on Feather River, a Central American pongy or 'dug-out,' with raised sides, canvas halfdeck, and two masts with small lug sails, which had safely brought six men from Panama, a voyage of 3500 miles, involving constant landings on a surf-bound shore for water and provisions.

The schooner on which I now embarked, had in the course of her adventures settled down to the essentials of what sailors call 'plain sail,' aspiring to no topsails, kites, or light follies of sail or rigging. Her hull was worn, battered and paintless, but tight, and her modest hold was crowded with provisions, water, baggage, and over thirty passengers, while her low deck found room for more water and provision casks, my ten asses and a few mules. Trinidad ought, by all accepted rules, to have proved an El Dorado, for it was certainly a very difficult place to reach. Hardly out of sight of port we sailed into another—or the same—gale from the N. W. and our small hold soon contained more seasickness to the square foot than ought safely to be stowed in a modern Atlantic liner.

But we had a smart Yankee skipper who well understood the handling of a 'fore and after,' and notwithstanding the anguish below, she made beautiful weather, looking up handsomely to the wind under close-reefed mainsail and jib, shipping surprisingly little water for such a low-decked craft, of less length and tonnage than many a New York pilot boat. But as a quarter-section of the main hatch had necessarily to be left open for air, a good deal of what water there was could not be kept out of the hold, and during most of the voyage there was hardly a dry spot aboard the vessel and the pump was constantly kept going by night and day, even the seasick passengers joining in the relays. In spite of the skipper's watchfulness and skill, during the long beat up to Trinidad in the teeth of wind and sea, most of the deckload went overboard, including all the mules, and several of my donkeys. One of the latter fell through the hatch and behaved himself with such gentlemanly tact and propriety, that I brought the remainder down and crowded them in between the center-board and the port bilge forward, where they lived with the passengers on the same grub, making themselves quite interesting and amusing, to the satisfaction of all, not the least amusing feature being the equanimity with which they accepted their sudden and extreme changes of position, at the frequent changes of tack.

At Trinidad, notwithstanding the protection afforded by its far-projecting promontory, such a mountainous sea was rolling into the harbor—if such an open roadway deserves that title—that our skipper was afraid to take the schooner in, although affairs transpiring inside were much too exciting to run away from. Four vessels had been caught by the gale at anchor inside, which delayed heaving up so long they found it impossible to beat out when they wished to, and were driven to the desperate expedient of trying to 'ride it out.' The brig *Wakulla* and two schooners were already piled up on the rocks, while the fine barque *Josephine* was as yet safely riding through the tremendous rollers which were making a clean breach over her, their spray sometimes almost hiding her from sight, and affording a stirring view for spectators, however poor fun for those on board.

The barque had veered her chains to full scope, and sent down royal and topgallant masts, and was evidently in charge of a seaman, but the rollers were so large and long that she rode nearly up to her anchors after the passage of one, and the next surged her astern till brought up on her chains with a shock and jerk distinguishable above all the roar of wind and waves. Lying just outside but not quite clear of the first break of the rollers, each one deluged her fore and aft, the clouds of spray flying over her topsail yards. The sight was so interesting to our skipper, who expected to see her windlass torn out from moment to moment, that he could not tear himself away, and kept our little craft standing off and on in a way that showed well her weatherly qualities and his seamanship.

Just before dark, the sea getting a cant upon the barque, her bowsprit went at the ship's head, carrying with it the fore-topmast and a lot of rigging. During the night her main and mizzen masts went over, her rail and deck houses were carried away, and when first made out the next morning, as we ran in from our offing, though still riding gallantly at her anchors, she was practically a wreck. With hatches battened down and all hands below, one could but think of the terrible night her crew had passed, their lives hanging on the endurance of each link of the chain cables, conscious that each thundering blow might be the last. Our schooner, shabby as she looked, proved weatherly and reliable, able to do almost anything but talk. With the bonnet off her jib, and a small storm-lug on the mainmast, she was well and fearlessly handled by the skipper, who for several days, kept close into the heads by day, and taking a good safe offing at night, only ventured in when the gale had blown itself out, and the rollers ceased to break inside. The battered wreck of the *Josephine* still swung at her anchors, but the fine brig *Wakulla*, and two large schooners were on the beach totally wrecked, with the loss of most of their crews.

The town was a small and shabby assemblage of tents and canvas shanties, then, like many other western towns, living mostly on its brilliant expectations. As I first entered it in the wild fury of the elements, I ultimately—as will be seen—left it amid the

still wilder passions of men, and I cannot say I have since felt any unconquerable yearnings to see it again, though its famous Head was then the best place to shoot wild geese that I almost ever saw. One could sit in the short chaparral which covered it and bring them down from the flocks continually flying over, about as fast as it was convenient to load, fire and recover the game.

As there were plenty of traders, and no great number of purchasers, since ten times as much merchandise was brought by vessels as could be carried away on mules, I had no great difficulty in obtaining on credit a load for my surviving jacks, and lost little time in setting out for the mines, the nearest of which were on Salmon River, about 150 miles distant over a mountainous country infested, down to within a few miles of the town, by much the worst Indians in California. As jacks cannot with their short legs keep up with mule trains, I had to resign myself to starting alone, and trusting to chance and watchfulness for evading these dangerous marauders. To this day I recollect the forlornness of that solitary departure, which seemed to be shared by my four-footed companions, and which even the good accounts I heard of the mines ahead and the profitable results I hoped for from my carefully selected cargo, did not serve at first to dispel.

But my persistent ill luck had not yet done with me. The very first night out produced an adventure which, however ridiculous it may seem in the retrospect, was not in the least amusing while it was in progress. It was already afternoon when I started from the village, crossed the stupendous ravines known as the 'one-mile' and 'four-mile' gulches, and it was getting dusk on the hills and pitch dark in the ravines, when I arrived at the deep gloomy bottom of another of the great hollows running down into the sea. Here was, as usual, a deep and ugly quagmire, across which I got most of the heavy-laden and tired jacks safely, but the last one tripped over a root on the nearly vertical descent, and from quite a considerable height pitched headlong into the mud. I quickly cut a lot of brush to stand on, got the pack off, and vainly tried till long after dark to pry and lift him out. Entirely failing in this, and the unlucky patient ceasing to make efforts for himself, I at last gave him up, and lugging his pack up the hill on my

back, laid myself down, covered with mud, depressed in mind, and too tired and exhausted even to cook any supper.

Now, all these ravines were swarming with grizzlies, and I would by no means have chosen my camp in such a likely place for them, if I had had any choice about it. Constrained, however, by the circumstances, and too tired to think much about anything, I rolled up in my blanket and soon fell sound asleep, till at some early hour in the coldest and darkest part of the morning, I was suddenly awakened by a slight but unaccustomed and suspicious sound. Possessing all my life the habit of waking instantly to full possession of all faculties, I was immediately aroused, and alert to listen without budging a muscle, the darkness being so intense one could scarcely distinguish the tree tops from the open sky. The object, whatever it might be, was evidently approaching but with so much hesitation and such extreme caution as to suggest the wariness of a human enemy. I had cautiously rolled over on my face and taken a good elbow rest, resolved not to fire prematurely, and to make my one shot tell for all it was worth. In this posture, with rifle cocked and finger pressing the trigger, I gradually made out through the gloom a large dark body but a few feet distant, and was only waiting till I could recognize some vital spot, when through the solemn silence of that crucial moment suddenly resounded a mournful and sonorous bray.

The dimly-seen monster, for whose heart my muzzle was searching at ten feet distance, was the unfortunate and abandoned jack, who, finding he was to get no more help, had concluded to help himself, and in his search for companionship had found me, I suppose by his smelling faculties. My joy at the unexpected recovery of so large a fraction of my modest capital amply compensated for the very bad ten minutes I had suffered. Since that time I have had to face many situations that might be considered startling, and have been correspondingly alarmed, but never more than by that investigating but friendly *burro*. To be gobbled ignominiously in solitude and darkness without a fair fighting chance, or a single sympathetic comrade to bury one's bones and report one's fate, simply on account of one's unavoidable poverty

and loneliness; these were some of the not very cheering reflections that rushed tumultuously through my mind during what I was quite persuaded were my last moments, as I gazed along the rifle barrel with a desperate hope that some miraculous Providence or friendly chance might yet interpose to direct the momentous bullet on which I supposed so much depended.

At earliest dawn I was off without further adventure, and after a long day's work reached the crossing of the Redwood, in the heart of what has since become well-known as a body of the largest timber in the world, just as a train of light mules was crossing on its way down. Here at last my abominable luck took a favorable turn. As jacks are too small to ford rapid and deep streams, I had been anxiously cogitating the respective merits of rafts and other expedients, when here was the question solved at once without an effort. The river being in flood, that circumstance which I had most dreaded, was the very one which smoothed my path, for the people of the mule train, finding the ford impracticable even for mules, had spent the day in felling an immense redwood tree across the river, which constituted a perfect bridge ten or twelve feet wide, and free to all comers, till some greater flood should carry it away. The method used to fell these immense trees was to cut a 'curf' all round as deep as practicable with the ordinary axe handle, then deepen it with ax handles of four feet length, and finally build a fire in it.

These people informed me that after getting clear of the redwoods some miles ahead, at a block-house called Elk Camp, the trail led for several days over high rolling grassy mountains, known as the Bald Hills, where grass and water were abundant but Indians numerous and hostile. In due time I reached Elk Camp, which was attractive not merely by contrast with the muddy and gloomy depths of the redwood forest where no sun's ray could penetrate, but as the threshold and entrance to one of the finest tracts of country in California. The region known as the Bald Hills, stretches along on both sides the Klamath from the inland margin of the great seacoast belt of redwoods for perhaps 100 miles by the river's course to the base of the higher snow-covered range of the Cascades, or as they are called in California,

the Coast Range. Elk then roamed over them in bands of hundreds, or perhaps thousands, finding the ideal conditions preferred by them. Deer abounded in all the brushy ravines, while bear and bighorn were plenty in the surrounding mountains. Water was found in every hollow, luxuriant grass grew everywhere, and timber was nowhere more distant than a few hours' ride. There can be few places in the world that furnish such a combination of circumstances favorable to the hunter or the cattle-owner, as there exist in respect of soil, climate, water, wood, pasture and scenery.

CHAPTER IX

TRADING IN A HOSTILE INDIAN COUNTRY

But that lovely and enchanting country, long since no doubt occupied and settled, had then one terrible drawback that rendered few miners willing to traverse it a second time, and kept even hunters and packers on a stretch of caution and anxiety. It was infested from end to end along all the streams with numerous small Indian tribes, of deadly hostility to the whites, and fortunately for us with strong proclivities for fighting with each other. Had they been united their numbers and courage would have kept their country inaccessible for a long time; but their tribes, habits, dress, ornaments and even language, changed every few miles along the main streams, rendering concerted action against the whites impossible.

It had become a custom for the packers to delay their trains at either end of this open country till a sufficient number had accumulated to make a safe passage and maintain the necessary night guards for mules and camp. With this view Elk Camp was being secured by a block house then in course of construction by some men who expected to find their compensation from the liberal expenditure of the packers for meals and whiskey during their detention. The mule packers, by whom such a large part of the transportation was done in early days, were a liberal and adventurous class, closely following, and in fact often leading, the first prospectors into every mountain defile, fond of hunting and adventure, making money easily and spending it freely, always ready for a hunt or an Indian fight, or any other excitement.

While the mule train was collecting, I remained several days at this delightful spot, some of us guarding the stock while others hunted elk on the hills, or deer and grizzlies in the ravines, or, I

regret to say, gambled with each other at the camp, which was made at the margin of the great redwood forest. Always ready to try any new hunting scheme myself, I improved the enforced leisure by the construction, with the aid of one of the post men and a friendly Indian, of a heavy crib bear trap of as large logs as we could handle, which yielded more fun than profit. On the first night we caught a fine panther, or, as the miners erroneously call it, 'mountain lion,' this last being a different and very rare animal with a partially striped hide and other distinguishing characteristics peculiar to himself. The panther being inexperienced in the wiles of men, had fallen a prompt and easy victim and when we cautiously crept up on the lee side of him at daybreak he was busily engaged in making an exhaustive examination of the curious invention so easy to get into, so hard to get out of. We worked a long time in the effort to take him out alive with the aid of a couple of raw-hide lariats, but he became so savage and excited we were obliged to shoot him. The next night was altogether wasted by a worthless wolf getting himself into the crib and keeping better company away. On the third and last night a well grown grizzly cub had pulled the trap down, but his mamma in order to extricate her baby had torn it to pieces and left only a ruin.

On that and subsequent occasions we shot numerous grizzlies at this camp. At the present time long range breechloaders and prepared cartridges render that sport easy enough. But with the muzzle loaders of those days having an extreme safe range of less than a hundred yards, one must kill at first fire at the peril of his life, because if the bear showed fight, as is not uncommon, it was rarely possible for a single hunter to reload in time for a second shot. Hence few hunters cared when alone to molest the animal except under peculiarly favorable circumstances. When a bear has his nose to the ground drinking, digging or feeling for acorns, as is often the case, a square right-angled shot at the top of his head will reach the brain and is the surest of all shots. Even when he is coming for the hunter, unless excited by wounds and rage, he is given to rearing on his hindquarters for better view or smell, and in that act often shows a whitey brown spot at or below the base of the throat, which is a fair mark for a heart shot. There

are men reckless enough to risk a side shot at the point of the shoulder, but for a solitary hunter with a short range muzzle loader all these shots are uncertain and dangerous except the first. With a companion of course the case is different, as the bear nearly always loses some valuable time whenever his attention is freshly attracted.

I once knew a hunter who killed many grizzlies in the Sonoma and Russian River valleys, and rarely declined to attack one with the sole assistance of a small noisy terrier dog. That wary but irrepressible animal had been taught to remain at heel till his master fired, and then make straight for the enemy's rear where he kept up such an insulting and alarming snarling and snapping as to tempt the bear to waste precious time by attending to his case first, giving the hunter time to reload and get in a second shot. But with muzzle loaders the best way to hunt this formidable animal in a safe and comfortable manner is for two or three reliable persons to hunt together on opposite sides of the small streams and swampy little valleys which they love to frequent at early hours for the berries, acorns, and kamas root with which such places abound. This magnificent, and on the whole, fearless animal, though equaling most others in activity, and exceeding all in strength and power, is very rarely aggressive unless wounded or followed up closely to his lair, and in my opinion he retreats to such places less from fear, than from a habit of attending strictly to his own business and a modest disinclination for a fuss. There is nevertheless one notorious case, that of a she-bear with cubs, when the mother will attack without any provocation whatever except mere vicinity.

I was once hunting grizzlies in the Russian River country with two settlers from Missouri, one of whom, named Boggs, separated from us to hunt down the opposite side of a narrow bottom closely fringed with large timber, having a close undergrowth. Before long, hearing an excited shout from the other side, we ran quickly in that direction, and scarcely three minutes could have elapsed before we reached the body of Boggs, dead and terribly mangled, his entire left side having been torn off by a blow of the bear's paw. His gun, broken but undischarged, lay near. From an

examination of the sign it appeared that B. had approached within twelve feet of a well-used, but now empty lair, from which the bear had sprung upon him without warning, and struck him down before he had time to fire. After making this summary disposal of B. the bear had made off so quickly with her cubs, that we did not get a glimpse of her. As in such a dense jungle she had probably not gone very far, we hastily removed the body without interference from her, and lashing it on a couple of poles, carried it sixteen miles to the nearest settlement.

On another occasion at a far distant locality in the Rocky Mountains some distance north of the *Tete Jaune* pass of the Athabasca, where the grizzly bear is a smaller and less formidable animal than his California relation, and not near so abundant, I was witness of another incident which illustrates the sudden and savage onslaughts which the female will make in defence of her young. Two of us were following the top of a long, high, thinly timbered ridge, about the last place to look for a grizzly, driving before us a few unladen pack horses, when a large bear sprang suddenly from a small thicket, killed the leading horse by a single blow, and frightened the rest over the side of the ridge. Being fully prepared for Indians, she received both our bullets at once, and so instantaneous was the whole affair, that a single minute had scarcely elapsed from her first rush, before the scrimmage was over and the bear lay dead in the trail. The attack seemed unprovoked and contrary to the usual peaceful habits of the animal. But here also there was a bed close by, still warm, and the tracks of two small cubs who had taken themselves away but were probably concealed not far off.

At various times and places I have seen a great number of grizzlies of both kinds, in divers sorts of interviews, both active and passive, some of which may perhaps crop out in subsequent parts of this narrative, but as far as I now remember, the above are the only instances in my own knowledge where the bear was aggressive and vicious from the start without intended provocation, and in view of the domestic circumstances the excuse for these may be regarded as reasonable if not satisfactory. I have heard stories of hunters treed and detained by watching and revengeful grizzlies,

but never myself knew of any well authenticated case. Nevertheless, in order to illustrate another of his traits, I am tempted, notwithstanding the length of this digression, to relate another incident tending to show that when, from his point of view, he is wantonly attacked, he is not without a passion strongly resembling a deliberate desire for vengeance.

It was at a place on Eel River near Humboldt Bay, not far below Trinidad, where in a dense redwood forest had been constructed a small log storehouse with roof, door, and a single window shutter of heavy 'puncheons' or plank split several inches thick. It was at some distance from any other house, and among other goods contained a store of barley in bags, for the mules of packers who sometimes fitted out there for the interior. A few days before our arrival a grizzly had torn off the shutter at night, reached in and carried off a bag, and liked it so well that he repeated his theft almost every night, on each occasion appropriating the moderate toll of one bag and no more. Happening to camp there one night in company with an experienced 'mountain man,' the storekeeper told us his trouble and begged us to kill this persistent depredator, there being no other resident ambitious to distinguish himself in that manner. Having heard plenty of such panicky yarns before, and not much expecting the bear to come when he was really wanted, we nevertheless carried our blankets down and slept on the roof, which was nearly flat and about six feet high at the eaves.

In the course of the night the shutter, though firmly spiked on, was torn off with a crash, and through the dense gloom which prevailed under the tall redwoods, we could dimly and doubtfully make out the bear's huge bulk moving off with his plunder. Since the view, indistinct as it was, could be but momentary, I rashly fired at what I took for the small of his back, hoping that if the shot missed the spine it might in ranging forward reach the heart. The bear at once dropped his booty and came for the broken shutter, which he minutely examined, walking once or twice around the small cabin and returning again to the window, all the time growling a vicious soliloquy to himself. Suddenly detecting us, probably by the smell, he stood up, placing both paws on the roof.

Whatever his intention, the movement gave Francois the shot he had waited for, and he planted his bullet at the base of the throat at arm's length. The bear dropped back on all fours and made off. Now the forest was not every dark, but the ground between the vast trunks was covered with a dense and tangled growth of 'brake' or fern higher than one's head and offering an uncommonly poor place for a rencontre at close quarters, so we prudently remained where we were till daybreak. The morning light disclosed a bloody trail which we warily followed for quite a hundred yards, when we almost stumbled over the bear lying in an upright position on all fours, his head resting on his paws as if asleep, which is not an unusual position of the grizzly when getting ready to 'pass in his checks.' Approaching through the dense undergrowth on opposite sides we found him nearly cold, having been dead for hours. The last shot had done the business, the first having been merely exasperating.

The grizzly bear is really such a formidable animal and was at first so astonishingly numerous in the fertile berry, root, and nut bearing valleys of California, that every old hunter who has ranged the superb hunting grounds which once bordered the Pacific Coast from San Diego to the Columbia, must remember him with regret, and I cannot take my leave of the monarch of the mountains, without relating another reminiscence which is of the amusing kind and which I know to be true.

When I was at Redding's Springs—now known as Shasta—at the head of the Sacramento and in sight of the glorious peak of the same name, a certain Dutchman had found some good diggings some miles from town, which he kept very secret and worked alone, coming in only on Sundays for the week's provisions. One night, having suffered some delay by the necessity of evading the boys, he reached home late with a good back load, including some fresh beef, which he hung up, and in order to keep off the thieving coyotes, made his bed underneath. During the night he was waked by a tremendous pressure on his body which seemed as though he must be squeezed flat. He was not long in finding that a huge grizzly, attracted by the savory smell (for though mostly frugivorous, they will not refuse meat when it comes in their way)

was standing astride of him making little jumps after the meat which he could just reach but not lay hold of. After each failure he would take a seat on the Dutchman and grunt a little to himself on the tantalizing nature of the situation. At last by getting a good footing on Dutchy he made a successful grab and went off with the plunder, paying no attention whatever to the lawful proprietor. The latter lost no time in getting back to town, where with eyes as big as saucers he told his moving tale to all who would listen, whereby his carefully concealed bonanza at once became public to all the world.

A sufficient number of packers had collected at Elk Camp and the time had come to make a start. Notwithstanding the slower gait of my animals, I hoped by starting earlier and arriving later, I might be able to keep up with the main party in a general way. At all events there was nothing better to be done, so on the appointed morning I took the trail at daybreak in advance of the mules, with numerous misgivings. The train came up in due time and being large and long was a good while in passing, but when the rear guard, who lingered a little to talk with me, had gone by, I felt decidedly sorry for myself, especially as it was naturally to be expected the Indians might be following them to pick up stragglers. But nothing molested me, and I came up with the train at its night camp before dark and turned the jacks into their guard, from which I was magnanimously excused. Substantially this course was repeated daily, till the Bald Hills and the worst of the Indian country was passed, during all which time I saw nothing to be afraid of, though usually received at night with cheers and congratulations which indicated plainly enough what was expected for me.

The trail, then new and rough, struck the first mining settlement at Orleans bar on the main Klamath, which however had been abandoned by the miners in favor of the better diggings above. It then, if I recollect right, ascended the Klamath to within fifteen or twenty miles of the mouth of the Salmon, where in order to avoid the nearly impassable precipices which line both rivers in that vicinity, it crossed the Klamath, climbed up twelve or more miles to the top of a rough mountain ridge, and came down on the

other side to the Salmon not far below its forks. At the latter place, it again ascended and traversed the long mountain ridge between the North and South forks and came down on the former by a vile precipitous route at a place called Best's tent, where the 'human face divine' was once more to be seen. Scattered along the creek over a space some twenty miles long above and below this point were several hundred miners, mostly prosperous, but cut off from the rest of the world by snow during nearly half the year, and in those days illy supplied with even the necessities of life.

My loads were soon well disposed of, and still better, I found even my despised jacks in good demand, and worth even more than mules for prospecting purposes. No other domestic animal can so well find food and exist among the wild mountain solitudes habitually traversed by prospectors. A jack on any fair ground can carry the outfit of two or three men, and on bad ground the man can carry him. He can live where a mule would starve, can be got into a canoe or on a raft, in short anywhere, and is so docile and sensible that he rarely leaves the camp and gives hardly any trouble. As mine were the first ever seen in that sequestered spot, I had no difficulty in selling them at almost my own prices, and without waiting for a train, started down the trail on foot at the rate of forty or fifty miles a day, mostly lying in concealment by day and pushing on by night.

It was, I think, at the fork or mouth of the Trinity where one Durkee kept a small block house, that I rested one night in anticipation of having to make next day the entire distance of sixty miles to Blackburn's post at the lower crossing of the Klamath. At Durkee's one Wooley, a mountain man well known in those parts, agreed to accompany me next day, but four miners who had been waiting there some days for a traveling party of safe numbers wished to go with us. In vain, backed by Durkee, we represented to them that the route lay through the worst Indian territory in the whole country, and must be covered in one day, without admitting of stoppages for any purpose; that a couple of mountain men alone, could fight, hide or run, according to circumstances, but six men were too few to fight, and too many to hide, and that anyone who should give out or break down was lost. They insisted

on going with us, but on the clear understanding that happen what would, we were not to stop for them on the road.

The morning start was made from the river so as to get on the mountain by daybreak, the ascent being through heavy timber to the ridge where the trail emerged on the Bald Hills. Just before reaching the summit, in the dim light of early dawn, a couple of bucks painted for war (breast bones and ribs white like skeletons), who had evidently been ambushed for a smaller party, jumped from behind a log and took silently to the woods. The incident was not encouraging, as our presence could no longer be kept secret. Two of the miners here thought better of their enterprise and started back to Durkee's, which as was afterwards learned they never reached, and were heard of no more. The other two insisted on keeping along with us though it was now certain we should be watched and probably followed, and our only safety lay in keeping ahead of the alarm and halting for nothing. We therefore swung along at our best gait, keenly watching all the distant swells and ridges, and for a time detecting no enemy. But towards sundown, first one and then the other miner began to lag and fall behind. Wooley and I waited for them several times at great risk to ourselves, and finally after warning them that the enemy were probably gathering and waiting somewhere between us and Blackburn's—left them, and saw or heard no more of them. Arriving toward dark within a few miles of Blackburn's, which was on the opposite side of the river, here running at the bottom of a deep hollow, smoke columns began to appear successively in front, rear and to the right. Seeing we were cut off on three sides, we moved along more leisurely till it became quite dark, and then plunged down a little hollow on the left which soon became a great ravine well filled with brush, sheltered by which, we reached and swam the river, and cautiously worked our way down among the rocks and willows on the water's edge, frequently obliged to enter the latter but without splash or sound, reaching B.'s late at night. The unfortunate miners were never heard of again.

At Trinidad I bought mules which were now arriving in considerable numbers, many owners being deterred from going to the interior by the Indian troubles above. Hiring a couple of Mexican

muleteers, and loading up the mules, I quickly started again for the mountains. At Blackburn's a party of about twenty men, mostly belonging to the train I had formerly gone up with, were getting ready to go out after Indians and insisted on electing me captain, a position I was reluctant to accept with the brilliant personal prospects I thought I then saw ahead. However, as nothing else would content them, I could not well avoid it, and assuming command, pushed out towards the north, into a country then quite unknown, whence had appeared the flank smoke signals which alarmed W. and myself on the last trip down. Finding a good sized stream we followed it into the mountains, finding two recent nests warm but empty. I had no scouts fitted to send ahead prospecting, and my party was much too insubordinate to permit my leaving them behind and undertaking the job myself. So, after burning the empty villages, we returned and raided up and down the main river valley. This almost bloodless enterprise failed to shed glory on any one, but undoubtedly rendered the hostiles more cautious and kept them farther removed from the trail.

After this episode I proceeded to work my mules for all they were worth, making several round trips to the mines, usually doubling my capital, or more, on each occasion, notwithstanding a few days off to rest the stock, which I generally devoted to Indian or elk hunting. The former, though attended at times with some disgusting cruelty from the miners who deeply resented the shocking mutilations practiced by the Indians on the bodies of their victims, and who could scarcely be restrained from any excesses when on rare occasions they could surprise a village, nevertheless tended to make the lower Klamath much safer and more peaceful. Elk hunting, whether mounted or by still hunting on foot, was then in its best condition, and supplied unsurpassed sport. Thousands roamed over the Bald Hills, and could be found in almost any of the great ravines, from which when started below, they would rush out above in large bands with a sounding tread like the rush of a cavalry regiment. I cannot forbear relating here an odd adventure with them which involved more work and excitement than usual, though reflecting little credit on the hunter.

In company with a mountain man and good hunter who was traveling to the mines with my pack train, I was one day hunting some strayed mules, with little thought of elk, when rising over a small elevation near the upper end of a deep and grassy ravine, we came plump upon nine elk which did not notice us at first, we having the wind of them. We did not need any meat, and had no mules with us to carry it, but finding such a tempting opportunity thrusting itself upon us, resolved to test a certain favorite tenet of all old hunters, namely, that if one can distinguish and kill the leader of a small band without sentinels, keeping to leeward and reasonably out of sight, one can, without much trouble bag all the others. We soon settled on a splendid antlered bull, and waiting a favorable shot, laid him low. The others at first startled by the shot, after a little galloping about huddled together round the fallen leader, without giving much attention to the mysterious cause of his disaster. Two more were soon bagged, and so on with the same result till the six bullets which we had between us were exhausted, leaving three fine young cows still lost in wonder at the strange events occurring around them, but showing no disposition to leave the scene. One of these investigating about, walked up in front of and close to us, lying quiet on the grass, and after taking a good look at us, tossed her head saucily and trotted off. My weapon was an old army yager with an iron ramrod, borrowed hastily before leaving camp, my own rifle being out of order. As the ground was open, being covered only with short grass, and the shot was close and certain, when a good side shot presented itself, I could not resist firing the rod at her, but not allowing enough for its weight, it dropped considerably even at the short distance, and instead of striking behind the shoulder, the light end struck her knee which it shattered, and the heavy end coming on hard behind, twisted the rod around both knees, like hobbling a mule. No sooner did we try to approach, however, than we found the animal could get about pretty lively, and it began to be a nice question how to recover the rod. Without it the gun was useless, and the country contained no suitable timber to make a wooden one. Therefore it must be had, and after lashing our knives on poles, lance fashion, we spent half a day

or more following that confounded elk over several miles of country—practically unarmed and liable to run plump upon Indians at every step—before we finally recovered it. It was a foolish and useless piece of folly, which might easily enough have cost both of us our lives.

Two other notable events occurred that summer, one of a tragical, the other of an amusing character. The first was at Blackburn's post, before mentioned, which having exerted such an important influence in opening up the lower Klamath, deserves some description. The place included a scow ferry across the river and was held by B. with eight hired men. The latter occupied a small canvas house in the rear of which was a small shanty of clapboards scarcely eight feet square, in which B. slept with the ammunition and some extra firearms. These structures stood on a low bar near the water's edge, and near them rose a vertical bluff perhaps forty feet high, from which stretched a small prairie of a few hundred acres, shut in on all sides but the river by the forest. On the prairie close by the edge of the bluff and overlooking and commanding the ferry, the men had commenced the construction of a block house not yet sufficiently completed for occupation. Beyond the river rose the mighty buttresses of the Bald Hills, sweeping up and away for several miles to the distant summit, along whose flank ran the pack trail gradually ascending the mountain side, till it disappeared up the river.

Camping one night in the timber a few miles below Blackburn's, with a large pack train of twenty men (besides Mexicans, who don't count much in an argument with firearms) we made a daylight start next morning, and as we approached the prairie back of B.'s, began to hear firing at his place. Quickly getting the white men in front we cautiously opened the prairie and charged down to the ferry, seeing no Indians, although the firing ceased. When we arrived and opened communication with B. who was shut up alone in the small house, a horrid scene was disclosed on the bar. The canvas shanty had been surprised and all its occupants simultaneously massacred. Their dying groans had aroused B. who opened fire and had successfully defended himself in the clapboard house. The eight bodies were scattered about the bar mutilated

in every shocking manner that the ingenuity of the savage had been able to devise.

Sometime during the night a body of Indians had surrounded the place quietly, cut their way into the canvas house and at a signal had killed without noise, every man. B., awakened only by the groans of the victims, had knocked off some of the upper clapboards of his shanty and opened fire. Being an old mountain man he wasted no shots, but the Indians knowing the small house could contain but one man, were ashamed to run away and leave him. After rushing several times on the house with disastrous results to themselves, they retired and tried to crush the roof by stones thrown down on it from the bluff. But as they had to carry the stones up from the beach, and the stones they were able to heave so far were not heavy enough for the purpose, they returned to the beach and after considerable discussion among themselves, commenced a series of single rushes on the door, one at a time, trying to chop it down. They might have kicked in the slight clapboards anywhere, but thinking, naturally enough, that the place to get in at was the door, they gave their whole attention to it, each volunteer shouting his death song, as like the Homeric heroes, they successively devoted themselves to death. But as the door was much the strongest part of the house, being made of split puncheons several inches thick, and B. did not give them much time for chopping, their devotion went for nothing and all their efforts failed. B. thought he had 'saved' at least six, though their bodies had been successfully carried off. We buried on the prairie the horribly mangled remains of the eight men as far as they could be found and gathered up and took B. along with us, but not before he had buried a box of powder under one end of the ferry scow then being built on the beach. In the box he placed a flint lock cocked, and the trigger made fast to the scow. It was afterwards learned through friendlies, that when the Indians returned after our departure and tried to push off the scow, an explosion occurred, which perhaps gave them a new idea of the ubiquity of the white man's vengeance.

The other incident referred to, though it entailed damage to some of the individuals concerned, was ludicrous enough to the

spectators. One Young with a few others had built a canvas house near the site selected for a block house on the main pack trail, which here led along the bench of a side hill several hundred feet above the river, behind which the bald, treeless hills rose steeply for several miles to the summit of the ridge. Two trains, of which mine was one, camped here one night, carrying up a crowd of miners sufficient in number to occupy for sleeping quarters the entire floor of the house. These men were scared and nervous about Indians, and being extremely tired were soon asleep, the canvas roll which closed the front of the house being let down on a closely piled barricade of tables, benches and boxes. Late at night, or rather early in the morning, when everything was snug and quiet and the stillness of night was only broken by the nasal music of the tired foot travelers, some scared mules came running down the hill, the cry of 'Indians' was started by some fool, and a panic, sudden and unaccountable, as such things always are, at once prevailed. Such as were not tangled up and struggling with their blankets, rushed to get out and tumbled over the barricade. A furious miscellaneous struggle commenced inside, everyone hitting out in the dark at pretty much every moving object. When order was at last restored almost everyone inside had been hurt by blows from shovels, pick handles and other extemporized weapons, one man having been killed by a blow from a hand-saw.

Personally I had slept outside with the packs to keep an eye on them and the mules. Young, who was an old hunter, with myself and the other packers, who all lay outside, were in position to know the folly of the affair from the beginning, but as the terrified miners stoutly defended the entrance, it was as much as one's life was worth to venture into the pandemonium raging inside. Fortunately the miners had few firearms, or it was too dark and confused to permit of their use. At all events grievous as were the bruises, wounds and broken heads, no shots were fired. The skinned carcass of a deer killed the day before and hanging outside near one end of the house suffered severely during the row. One bold fighting Irishman was caught furiously belaboring it with a pick handle, the venison persistently swinging back and hitting him after each vicious and well aimed blow.

Before taking leave with reluctance of the Bald Hills, I must not forget to mention the extraordinary skill of those Indians in snaring elk and other large animals in nooses of stout rope made by themselves from bark, which sometimes got them into trouble with the whites, as in the following case. At Durkee's some of his friends once confided to me, with much secrecy, a mysterious accident they had met with which they feared would peril their friendly relations with Durkee, who while protecting them from others was sometimes disposed to be rather violent with them himself. Accompanying them therefore at their urgent request, some miles to the top of the ridge, they pointed out an unlucky ox belonging to D., which must have been dead for a fortnight and still lay just as he perished in a running noose set for elk on a well marked runway. The noose had been skillfully arranged by placing a log for the game to step over and a branch necessary to stoop under, the two together well calculated to divert attention from the snare itself. Two long brush fences extended from the spot on either hand obtuse-angled toward each other, so that any animal traversing the runway would surely be led directly to the noose, and get entangled while avoiding the obstacles placed to distract his attention. Unfortunately D.'s ox, unaccustomed to such fiendish contrivances in the far-off Missouri prairies of his youth, had in this case fallen an easy victim, and perished by a lingering and solitary death. As D. had already missed the animal and had repeatedly sent them to look for it, I advised them to make a voluntary confession before he should discover the fact for himself. That they were afraid to do, but recognizing the sound nature of the advice, insisted that I should tell the tale for them so that in case of too violent an ebullition of wrath they might take to the woods for a time.

To account for such excessive apprehension it should be explained that stock stealing, natural and tempting as it is to the Indian, is deemed about the worst sin he can commit, and if strongly suspected he would have about as much chance for his life as a sheep dog caught red-handed. On this occasion it was smoothed over for them with D., who was amused with their fear of him, and went up with them himself to see how the mischief had

been done. Though D. was liable to be so violent and exacting with his friendlies, he was a safe and good friend to them, and like most of the mountain men who have passed their lives in fighting Indians, would have defended them against rascally white marauders with his life if necessary.

After a summer's hard but not unprofitable nor unpleasant work, I went down to Trinidad, as it proved to be, for the last time. In order to rest and improve my hard worked stock, I camped some ten miles below the town on a large and lovely prairie not far from the beach of the Pacific though surrounded by forest, known as Dow's prairie. The place was well grassed and watered, full of strawberries even at that season, and teeming with game, especially elk, in great numbers. At daybreak almost any morning, one might find immense droves of that noble deer feeding and sporting in the numerous deep bays of the prairie projected in all directions into the surrounding forest. In this attractive spot were a number of mountain or company men, resting themselves and stock till it should be time to start on their winter's hunt in the mountains. One of these whom I met here casually and for the first time, I was destined to know long and intimately during a future not yet revealed, and to share with him many wild adventures of the wilderness such as I little contemplated at the time.

Francois Bisell was like many of his class, a half-breed of Canadian and Huron stock, the Indian blood predominating, since his father had been a half-breed before him. In my partial eyes, he retained most of the best traits of both races, possessing, with the tenacity and coolness of the whites, the Indian's taciturnity and silent endurance, with the courage and intelligence of both. He was exactly of my age, having been born on the same day, six feet high, handsome and well proportioned, fearless in character though extremely amiable, and was by far the best hunter I have ever met. Our intimacy commenced with a circumstance which I am sure neither of us had cause to be ashamed of or regret, although it led to subsequent acts not perhaps so easily defensible. We had been up the coast some miles above Trinidad to an Indian village where we occasionally got a sea otter skin or two, and were returning to camp by way of Trinidad, the only available mule

trail lying through the town. On emerging from the 'one mile gulch' just above the town, we came upon several of the boiled-shirt gentry (gamblers) who had three Indians bound to trees and were discussing in what manner to put them to death. The Indians, who knew us, called on us to save them, and we recognized them as inhabitants of the village we had just come from. Some cattle had been killed near the town, and the gamblers, who knew nothing of Indians and could neither find nor catch any wild ones, had seized these poor friendlies who were in frequent and amicable communication with packers and fur men, and living in permanent quarters near-by at the whites' mercy, would have as soon thought of suicide, as of hostile acts against such dangerous neighbors.

The gamblers however were determined to have the fun of murdering someone, and the only effect of our remonstrance was to draw their cheap wrath upon ourselves. They cursed us for d—d 'fur men' and 'mountain men,' who were no better than Indians ourselves, and in fact were in league with them and should by right be hung also. Like the rest of their kind they flourished bright shiney six-shooters and bowie knives, but had no rifles, thinking no doubt their numbers gave them a sure thing on us; but not of that opinion was Francois. F. possessed that dangerous sort of temperament that becomes cooler in exact proportion as danger comes nearer, and at the very crisis, he was sure to be almost painfully deliberate. Without taking his eyes an instant from the enemy, he remarked to me in a drawling tone in Chinook "Will you fight?" "Yes." "Then I will be captain; watch me." It must be explained that the first step of mountain men on getting into a tight place with Indians or others, is to select a captain whose actions and words are to be closely regarded. Thus no talking is required, and the captain, knowing the others will do what he does, neither too soon or too late, need not remove his eye an instant from the enemy. Suddenly drawing his rifle F. ordered "Throw down your pistols. Hands up!"

Now the gentry before us were professed desperadoes and fighting men, killing each other or some unlucky miner nearly every night; but not expecting hostilities from the smaller party, were fairly taken by surprise, and possibly somewhat impressed by the repu-

tation for quick and sure shooting, usually attributed to mountain men. They were well huddled up together, and may have had time to reflect that at their first hostile motion two or more would be dead for certain, with a smart chance for some more. At any rate, the order was obeyed and their pistols secured. The Indians were cut loose and directed to back off slowly into the gulch and then run, which they obeyed to the letter, and in the course of about one minute after they disappeared over the edge of the gulch, they would have been about as easy to find as a weasel in a stone pile. The most risky thing remained, to get away ourselves. We feared to take the pistols, as that would have really put us in the same category with Indians, and these gambling rascals controlled the opinion and action of the town. They were therefore discharged and handed over, and their owners ordered to move on toward town, while we, getting our horses with much more rapidity of movement than F. had been recently displaying in face of the enemy, disappeared in the timber and by a wide detour around the town got down to camp the same night.

There we found sympathetic hearers, and ascertained that by sending for three men camped near Humboldt Bay, we could at once muster eleven reliable mountain men, who might be counted on to stand together. It was certain none of us dare go to the town again separately, and extremely probable we should be attacked where we were. It was therefore determined to send some of my neutral Mexicans up to reconnoiter, while making hasty preparations to anticipate hostilities by raiding, or in the frontier vernacular, 'bully ragging' the town. We might have done it the same night but for my pack train which was loaded, and could neither be driven on the main trail through the town, nor immediately concealed. The ponies of the fur men were driven off and cached in the timber, and with plenty of help, I got my train through the red woods and avoiding the town by a long and rough detour, crossed the Redwood River well up towards its source and camped in a grassy ravine which penetrated the forest from the Bald Hills above Elk Camp. There the train was safe from anything except the prowling Klamaths and not difficult for me to join later by a short cut through the timber. These matters

being disposed of and our party reassembled, the following plan was agreed on. It was lawless, unjustifiable and even criminal, yet two considerations may be urged in palliation. First. Though planned by an illiterate Scotch half-breed who had never seen so much as a platoon of soldiers, it was both in conception and execution, relative numbers and obstacles considered, a splendid piece of military strategy which any soldier might study with advantage. Second. We had been badly treated, could not venture into the town without being set upon and killed *seriatim*, and with our inferior numbers there was no other way of getting even with the twenty or thirty gambling rascals who controlled the place, except to surprise them by a vigorous initiative. The following brief topographical description is required to render intelligible the events that followed.

The road from Dow's prairie leads up about ten miles on a beach of hard sand, crossing over several precipitous rocky points of timber running out into the sea, each of which affords a good defensive position either to retard pursuit, or to escape to the mountains if hard pressed. The town is situated on a bluff rising vertically from the beach several hundred feet high at the lower or southern end, but diminishing to nothing at the other end where the landing is situated. From the landing a single road turns from the beach and ascends the bluff parallel with the coast to the top, a distance of a quarter of a mile or more. This road or street is, or was, the only one in the place, and was lined on both sides with tents or canvas shanties, the only frame being a good sized two-story house at the lower end by the landing. This house was occupied by the gamblers who both preyed upon and controlled the town, and in the evenings by a crowd of their dupes. The rear part of the lower floor displayed a large and gaily furnished liquor bar, while the front part was filled with gambling tables renting at twenty dollars a night each. Some of the gamblers slept on these tables, the others on the second floor. Though fights and rows were of nightly occurrence, in which the gamblers usually came off first best, there was no doubt that in any attack from outsiders, the town, as far as its prowess went, would make common cause to defend the place. Just south of the town where

the bluff was highest, there was a narrow bench somewhat more than half-way up the height, but a few feet wide containing a small *rancheria* or Indian village of three or four houses and a spring of water, through which a steep and rough Indian path never used by, but not absolutely impracticable for, horses mounted the bluff.

The following was McLeod's plan exactly as adopted and carried out. All effects having been removed from Dow's prairie, our eleven men with advance and rear guards ready told off, left that point timed to reach the foot of the Indian path just before daybreak. Everything being quiet and a guard quickly set over the Indian houses, the whole party succeeded in getting their horses up the bluff and withdrawing the guard, concentrated at the top of the street. The advance guard then giving the Crow war-whoop, galloped down to secure the gambling house, the others riding leisurely after them in single file reserving rifles, but firing pistols at every head seen and at every opening door. The shopkeepers were thus kept from assembling and furnished with useful reflections to occupy their minds. The advance guard closely supported, entered the gambling house through every downstairs door and window, seized and smashed about twenty rifles stacked behind the bar, pinned a lot of gamblers who were sleeping on the tables into a corner, and notified their friends above that we didn't want any of their money, but if a single shot was fired, we would fire the building and let no one come out. Then the barkeepers having been hunted out, all hands rode their horses up to the bar by detachments and obliged the dishevelled officials to treat each astonished nag, as well as his rider, to a bowl of their best beverage. The visit having been well rubbed in by the above and more objectionable methods, and some of our men showing a dangerous inclination to drink too much, old Mac called us off. All the arms, boots and clothing in sight, being a considerable pile, were carried out and tossed into the sea, and the enemy being thus disabled from immediate pursuit, no time was lost in traveling down the beach to Dow's and thence scattering into the mountains.

Though the vicinity of Trinidad is by no means uninteresting, and the 'Head' which gives it such harbor facilities as it enjoys,

was the best place to shoot wild geese I ever saw, I have never seen it since. Rejoining my train by devious routes through the forest, I pushed on up the river, by no means sorry to see the distance lengthen out behind me. At this time I had accumulated a train of fine mules, owed nothing, and had six Mexican *Arrieros* to perform most of the daily drudgery. These were a murderous but cowardly lot, worthless for Indian fighting but very dangerous to their padrone, especially on the down trip when his pockets were well filled with gold dust. On such occasions when there was no white passenger along, I frequently slept apart in the woods, not being much afraid of them by day, but much objecting to having their rascally knives feeling among my ribs when asleep. It was not uncommon to hear of packers being murdered by them, and I never considered my life very safe among them, which accounts partly for not losing it, but my next catastrophe was to come from a different source.

CHAPTER X

CAMPING AND TRAPPING IN MIDWINTER

It was on an evening late in the summer, and quite frosty among the mountains, that I camped on a high bar of the upper Klamath, some fifty miles or more above the debouch of the Salmon, hunting out a practicable passage to the new mines then thought to exist about Klamath Lake. The mules were turned out as usual and the packs and *aparejos* piled in a row to make a windbreak for our blankets on the lee side, which was toward the river. Lofty mountains hemmed us in on all sides, the calm silence of a quiet evening prevailed, and night closed gradually down on us and all the property I possessed, but was destined never to see again.

During the calm moments of that deceitful evening, in the hidden recesses of the mountain solitudes, a catastrophe was even then preparing which, before another sun should shine, was to sweep upon us with resistless fury, destroy the lives of most of us, bring ruin to many homes in far tropical Mexican valleys, reduce me to poverty, and change all my prospects, hopes and plans. A few eventful seconds sufficed to work all that ruin and it is difficult to convey to those who have not witnessed the shock of a midnight Indian onset, the horror of the moment when an unprepared and sleeping camp is instantaneously converted to a scene of carnage and blood. There are some sober moments during the first deliberate advance of a determined infantry charge, and a wild intoxicating excitement in a tumultuous rush of cavalry, but such enterprises have been well considered, and one is quite prepared for what is to be done, and, stirring as they are, they have little to remind one of the unexpected lightning-like shock of a successful Indian surprise by night.

It was at some late hour of the night that a mounted band of up-country Indians, who had doubtless watched us long and marked our camp well, deployed quietly on the high bar we lay upon, between us and the river and in an instant covered us with a thick flight of arrows and charged home. At their first yell of battle, quickly followed by the rush of horses, I kicked off the blankets and partly rose, but seeing they must go over us, threw myself down flat on the ground till they had passed, and while the horses were stumbling and jumping over the row of *aparejos*, I sprang up and ran for the river, rifle in hand, jumping in the darkness from the high vertical bank as far as possible to clear the rocks. Fortunately I struck deep water, and though the current was strong, succeeded in swimming back and finding concealment in shallow water among some rocks and small willow brush. Here I drew my load, wiped out, and reloaded, soon discovering for the first time a broken arrow sticking painfully in the front or upper part of my thigh. It was too dark to see anything, and owing to the noise of the water I could hear nothing from above, so I proceeded to examine the injury as well as I could by feeling. The arrow had entered on one side, passed an inch below the skin and the point projected slightly on the other side. There was considerable laceration and bleeding, and in consequence of the barb, it was impossible to draw it back, so after getting rid with some trouble of the broken end, I finally pushed it through in the original direction with much pain, and tied up the wound as well as I could.

After an hour or two in the water, during which I nearly perished with cold, there being some signs of daylight, I succeeded in climbing up the bank and carefully reconnoitered. Not a sound disturbed the silence, and gradually and with caution I approached our late camp. Here lay four dead Mexicans full of arrows and some of them showing considerable cuts about the head from the long heavy knives carried by those Indians. By cautious signals I at length found one of the Mexicans hiding in the timber, and with his aid discovered another lying near, still living, but shot squarely through the body. Daylight gradually appeared, enabling us to make sure that the Indians had definitely cleared out, apparently satisfied for the present to get safely away with the stock.

While occupied in making a better dressing of my own wound and doing what was possible for the wounded Mexican, I sent the other man to follow the retreating trail in hopes he might find a mule or two escaped from the main lot, as is not at all uncommon, mules thus suddenly startled and run off to the mountains, often showing surprising ingenuity in concealing themselves so as to get left behind and return to company or pasture that has proved agreeable. The trail which was of course broad and easily followed, led at first up the small creek which came in at the upper end of the bar, and in no great time the man returned with two good mules which had escaped in the darkness, confusion and thick undergrowth, and were leisurely returning down the ravine.

Having arranged to take turns in holding the wounded and apparently dying man, fire was set to the packs and *Aparejos*, and the mules quickly saddled and mounted, I undertaking the first charge of the wounded man, which proved not only painful to the feelings but extremely fatiguing. At the first suitable place we swam the river and plunged into a ravine leading up the opposite mountain, intending if possible to strike the miners' settlements either on the lower Shasta, or Scott's River, estimated at about sixty miles distant, by as straight a cut as practicable through the mountains. We rode all day through a rough and extremely difficult country, taking frequent turns with the wounded man, who suffered extreme agony and rapidly sank. Having become mostly unconscious the same afternoon, it became necessary to seat him in the saddle and ride behind him, and not long before dark while changing seats it was discovered he was dead. Quickly covering the body with rocks, we pushed on more rapidly till dark, when we turned loose the mules, and walking back on our trail about half a mile in the bed of a small creek, lay down where we were certain to be disturbed by, and get timely notice of anyone following on our track. Nothing appeared during the night, and we resumed the road as soon as we could see, making much better progress now that we were relieved of the incumbrance of the previous day. It was late one evening on the second or third day of this difficult and painful ride that we came down on the lower Shasta and soon struck a miner's camp.

It was while pottering around this vicinity nursing my wounded leg, that I was overjoyed to meet my dear Francois, that pearl of mountain men and staunch comrade whom I had parted from on the retreat from Trinidad with little expectation of ever meeting again. It was a timely and joyful meeting. We were now both 'broke,' both piously hated the regular humdrum labor of mining, and both had a dangerous secret to keep; so after living awhile on the proceeds of the deer which F. shot for the mining camps, we concluded with the three mules remaining to our joint estates, to push out for the mountains north of the big river (Columbia), where F. knew the country, and pass the winter in trapping sable, or martens, as the Americans call them.

It was late in the season for so long a journey. Since our animals would have the whole winter to rest in, we did not spare them but pushed on rapidly, passing the Rogue River and upper Umpqua districts without trouble from those Indians, who had not yet been driven to the long and bloody war they were forced into some years later by the depredations of settlers and politicians. Crossing the Calapooyas we hurried on down the great Oregon valley, crossed the Columbia, where we traded our mules for a larger number of Kayutz horses, and coming out near the head of the Okanagan, crossed the divide to the Thompson, getting across that fine river with much difficulty below, and not far from the Shuswap lakes. We had expected to get into the Rockies somewhere in this vicinity, but finding the Wapta, Tete Jaune and other passes of the Saskatchewan and Athabasca, all infested by Blackfeet, we kept on up the North Thompson crossed the upper Frazer near its head and got into the Rocky Mountains by the Smoky Fork of the Peace.

Though on this long route we had met with a number of Company men returning from the American mines, and likely to be belated like ourselves, yet we were quite a month too late to find a good place and make suitable preparation for a northern winter. Under the experienced guidance of F. we were not long in choosing a good district for trapping, nor even in getting horses through the mountains though snow had commenced to fall and already lay in large quantity on high elevations. But after getting down to the

eastern foothills and out on the plains, we found the great buffalo herds had disappeared, leaving no recent sign, and it was necessary to rely on moose, caribou and an occasional wood buffalo to provide material for the winter pemmican. Selecting a fine valley in the foothills to serve as winter quarters for the horses when we should be done with their services, we had a good deal of hard and laborious hunting in the vicinity, which only produced a moose or two, a few caribou and mule, or jumping deer, and perhaps a couple of wood buffalo, a variety rather larger and more solitary than the buffalo of the plains and rarely found out of the mountains. Not having the good fortune to secure many fat animals, we were obliged to smoke-dry most of the meat, contenting ourselves with but little pemmican, which requires fat in considerable quantity to make it good. Much difficulty was encountered in packing these provisions up into the higher region selected for the winter's trapping ground. The snow by this time covered most of the country, and the ground was everywhere hard frozen; in fact, we owed the hard and uncomfortable winter which followed, to the lateness of our arrival and preparations. It was extremely difficult to get worked-out horses though the snow, in consequence of which we hurriedly chose for winter quarters a place which proved to have indifferent advantages, and it was even more difficult and dangerous to get the wretched animals back to the valley destined for their quarters. Though we lost none on this occasion, they had many bad falls and for at least a fortnight got little to eat but willow brush. Hard travelling, poor rations, and stumbling over snow-covered rocks and logs, left them little better than bags of bones when at last after *caching* the saddles in a dense fir tree, we let them loose and turned our backs on them for the winter.

In that wintry valley it is probable that grain-fed horses would have starved to death in a week, but it is surprising how these hardy Indian ponies will live and get fat under such unpromising circumstances. They know how to get a good living from the old grass still standing on wind-swept places comparatively free from snow, and on vertical rocky banks where it cannot lie, and with plenty of time and no work to do, when all else fails can live for weeks at a time on alder, poplar and willow brush, and can prob-

ably come safely through the winter anywhere that the summer produces such growth at all.

For myself I knew but little of the kind of work laid out for the winter, but my companion had been in the H. B. Company all his life, and was as experienced a trapper, hunter and traveler, as was to be found throughout all its vast territory. There was no fish, bird or animal whose habits and resorts he did not know. If there was a deer anywhere within ten miles he was sure to find it, and I doubt whether he had a superior anywhere as a mountain man and hunter. I never knew him lose his bearings in the most intricate and perplexing mountain ranges, except on a few occasions in consequence of my bad advice, and then, when I gave it up, he was always able to rectify it quickly, and I never heard a reproach from his lips. It is no very difficult thing to get about through the mountains on foot, provided one knows the various resources for procuring food, and is not pressed for time. But to get horses along, especially when loaded, one can afford to make few mistakes, because the animals fail or die while one is trying to rectify blunders. I suppose persons whose mountain travels have been confined to well marked trails with good guides, can hardly realize that the two surest traits of a good experienced mountain man, are first, the faculty of knowing at the beginning whether a bench, pass, or stream which has a promising entrance will do to trust to; and second, the certain and unfailing knowledge whether one has actually crossed a high divide, and is really coming down on other waters, or whether in the endless intricacies of the mountain ranges, he has only got from one long ridge on to another, and is really descending on the same waters. The last mistake is extremely common, and has cost many a man his life, some instances of which will appear later on.

Before settling down to our winter's work it may be well to describe what a sable trapper's work is like. It is totally different from beaver trapping, which requires an outfit of steel traps, and must be pursued along streams and rivers which are also frequented during the winter by Indians, whose hostility is often extremely dangerous. The marten, or sable is a small animal of the weazel tribe that lives well up in the middle district of the mountains,

where the Indians unless travelling, rarely come in winter. The trapper having deposited his livestock in a safe place, and laid up either pemmican or smoked dried meat for provisions, sits down on some remote, difficult and well concealed stream, well up, though not too high among the mountains, and makes a small brush shelter, open in front, and if possible with plenty of dry, wind-felled timber close by. Here he can have as much fire as he chooses at night, when the smoke cannot be seen, but if he is prudent and regards his scalp, he will not risk much of it during the day. Nor will he ever discharge a gun either by night or day, except in circumstances of stringent necessity.

Here he is soon snowed in, and shut off from all the world, provided he has been sufficiently careful of his trail, and the marks and signs he has left behind him. His horses turned out in some distant valley, may be and often are discovered and stolen, in which event he must, when spring comes, replace them in the same way, or abandon all the proceeds of his winter's labor. Having made his quarters comfortable, safely disposed of his provisions, and prepared snow-shoes and trap sticks, one of the pair starts off taking a long leading ridge for forty miles or more, setting traps in favorable places as he goes, crossing over and returning by some similar ridge as far as practicable. Each of such trips may occupy a week or more; sometimes if fresh snow falls, considerably more, and on his return his partner does the same, of course avoiding the same ridges. Thus they alternate all winter, setting and resetting traps, skinning, and packing in the skins. While in camp there is plenty of work, *fleshing*, drying, stretching and packing the skins and trapping small game for fresh provisions when it can be had.

But if a *carcajou*, or as the Americans call them, wolverine, gets on the line of traps, or if quarters have to be moved in midwinter in consequence of scarcity of martens, or, worst of all, should the sign of some prowling Indian be detected, it may become necessary to move the camp and the entire theatre of operations far away to another district, in which case the skins already collected must be *cached* and protected from the weather, and from hungry prowlers, and every other asset backed on snowshoes through the wildest and roughest intricacies of inhospitable mountains covered deep

with snow. Supposing, however, that such accidents and removals can be avoided, the mere routine of trap-setting and attendance gives but little trouble except after fresh falls of snow, especially when caught by storms far away from camp. Notwithstanding that in the low temperature of those regions, snow frequently falls dry and hard-frozen like sand, it has a constant tendency to settle and pack, and can often be traversed without snowshoes, though when these are not worn they must always be carried ready for use, usually over the shoulder with the bag of fire sticks.¹³

Indians in reasonably safe localities, are not apt to be troublesome in winter, they also preferring to stay near their camps, the large game they seek also mostly retiring to the lower elevations. Perhaps the worst enemy of the trapper on the whole at that season, is the *carcajou*, or wolverine, which is active and ubiquitous at all seasons, and when it discovers a single trap or trail, seems to possess an extraordinary and devilish ingenuity for tracing out and infesting the entire line. He is a solitary and mysterious animal, often felt but rarely seen, and most trappers credit him with a malignant and superhuman intelligence always applied to evil purposes. In

¹³ The fire sticks, which are the sole means of producing fire, used by trappers and Indians, are two in number. The first is of hard wood, rectangular in section, about two feet long, half an inch thick and perhaps an inch and a half wide at the center, tapering to nothing at both ends. On the top surface are one or more depressions to engage the end of the other stick, each depression having a small deep notch leading from it to and through the edge of the stick. The second stick is of soft wood eighteen inches long, half an inch thick, round in section, blunt at the lower end and tapering at the other. A little tinder made from the dried and pounded inside bark of certain trees, is carried with the fire sticks. To make a fire, the first stick is laid flat on the ground with some tinder under the outlet of the notch before mentioned. The operator kneels with one knee on each end of the stick, the notched edge being directed away from him. The blunt end of the soft wood stick held upright, is inserted in one of the depressions and a rapid twirling motion given it by rolling between the hands. The friction immediately produces a fine brown powder at the point of contact which as it rapidly increases in volume fills the notch and flows out into a minute heap upon the tinder. This at once begins to smoke and soon ignites, when the tinder is folded around it and either exposed to the wind or waved once or twice through the air when it bursts into a blaze and being properly inserted in a small pile of suitable material laid ready for the purpose, the fire is secured. The whole operation rarely exceeds two or three minutes and if the weather be very bad is facilitated by gathering a robe around the operator and his implements.

fact, his habit of remaining all winter in the most inhospitable regions, from which most of the small animals on which he preys have departed for lower levels, and the unerring manner in which he follows out for long distances a line of traps carefully concealed and separated by ingeniously contrived breaks and intervals, may well puzzle wiser heads than those of the poor trapper.

Marten traps in themselves are simple enough; it is in the locality, lines, directions and modes of concealment from uninvited guests, that the trapper's skill consists. They are made by arranging a small enclosure of driven stakes with a single opening. Across that is laid as threshold, a log, stone or even a flat chunk of ice, upon which at one end rests the moveable deadfall, the other end of the latter supported by some of the various kinds of trap sticks, the common 'figure four' being usually preferred. A small bait of fresh or dried meat, the former preferable when it can be had, is carried by the triggerstick inside the enclosure where the marten can only reach it by introducing his long neck through the entrance. As soon as he seizes it, conscious of the suspicious character of the arrangement, he quickly backs out, bringing down the fall which breaks his neck or his back on the lower log without marking the skin, which in that climate, even when covered by snow, will keep fresh a long time if not found by the carcajou, or other carnivorous prowlers.

After the trapper has laid in his provisions, disposed of his horses and settled down in his solitary winter-quarters, incidents are few, and as none of a pleasant character are likely to occur, the fewer they are the better for him.

The Indians, if wild, are living down in the valleys of the foothills along the streams, where the climate is less severe and food more abundant. If friendly, they are scattered about in lonely places like the trappers, engaged in the same occupation of catching furs for the Company. Few large animals continue to frequent the high mountains through the winter. A solitary moose or caribou may be found occasionally, even along the highest streams, but the elk, the wood buffalo, and most of the deer are down among the foothills. Panthers, cats, wolves, and foxes follow the animals they prey upon. Bears of all kinds are rarely seen, perhaps because they

are hibernating, though I never myself caught one in that act. Considering the marten as the principal object and study of the trapper, it is surprising how much less is known of his habits than those of other animals of much less consequence to him. Though considered entirely carnivorous, he remains all winter far up in the mountains whence the small animals and birds on which he preys have to a certain extent departed, and where scarcely any animal or track is to be seen but his own and those of his enemy, the carcajou, or perhaps an occasional mink, or belated squirrel. Another mystery, by no means well understood, is where he keeps himself, and how he is occupied all winter. Even where most abundant he is rarely seen at that season except dead in traps, while during the summer months he is lively, playful and almost sociable, and though nocturnal in habit, shows himself frequently by day. On summer mornings and evenings he loves to examine the trapper's camp, dodging around a pine trunk like a squirrel, climbing about overhead, stealing a little from the fresh game when there is any, and even chasing about and running over the trapper's bed before he is up. All these sociable habits he abandons during the the winter, when he is rarely seen, and if seen is sure to be engaged in paying close attention to business. Many of the credulous trappers believe the marten is quite aware that his skin is commercially too worthless to bring him into danger during the mild season, and bends all his sagacity to the work of preserving it through the winter. But credulity is a principal characteristic of all the race of trappers, and like the Indians they attribute superhuman qualities of intelligence to most animals against whom their sagacity is pitted.

In ordinary circumstances there is little in the trapper's winter life to vary the unexciting monotony of work, privation and exposure, unless scarcity of fur or food, or the signs of too inquisitive Indians require removal of quarters, in which case he is apt to meet with plenty of incident, none of which is likely to be agreeable. Such dangers principally arise from the severity and sudden changes of weather, and especially from high winds during very low temperature, which away from shelter cannot be faced with impunity. Indian hunters or runners, indolent as they are disposed to be at

that season, are sometimes seized with an inconvenient spirit of enterprise, and wandering far from their camps below, may come upon some neglected evidence of the trapper's presence which may cost him dear. Of course if trap, trail or sign be once found, the entire village is sure to turn out in cautious search, and it is only a question of time when his camp will be hunted down and surrounded at such time, and in such manner as may give him poor opportunity for escape or defence. Hence the importance of leaving little sign and making few trails, and where these cannot be entirely avoided, of making them only on side hills and rough places not likely to be frequented by a hostile traveler or hunter. When a strange sign is discovered it must be cautiously traced out and the locality of the Indian village ascertained and avoided, and if notwithstanding all such prudence the neighborhood is found too dangerous, new quarters must be found. In looking for a new camp in severe weather, but little food can be carried, and if the search is prolonged or carried to a distance, it sometimes becomes very difficult for the most expert mountain man to supply his necessities.

In our case about this time, martens being scarce and the camp in consequence of the lateness of our arrival having been badly chosen, it was found necessary to shift it in the dead of winter, for which purpose taking but little provision from our scanty store, and *caching* the rest of our effects, we pushed out in a northerly direction, hoping to find a better location on some of the other tributaries of the Peace. But with ground covered by heavy snow, streams hard bound with ice, and frequent wind storms which at the low prevailing temperatures none can face and live, our progress was slow and no place looked very attractive. Hence no great time had elapsed before we found our provisions exhausted, in a difficult country with game not to be had. Making a temporary shelter in a bad place and under unfavorable circumstances, we therefore proceeded to devote our whole attention to hunting, till after some days we became awake to the fact that the district was absolutely without game. Every day the weather permitted, we covered long distances in opposite directions, without finding so much as a recent sign or track. Then we set traps for fish in

such rapids as remained open, and for birds and small animals, but without success. Travel over the rocky side hills concealed by snow, was exhausting and dangerous, both of us getting some bad falls. Moreover, as one dare not stir from camp in the uncertain weather without carrying a considerable weight and bulk of articles like furs, snow-shoes and so forth, which might at any moment become essential to life, we soon became weak and exhausted. After trying in vain all the resources practised by trappers in such straits, all of which were well known to Francois, we ate the grease in our rifle stocks, all the fringes and unnecessary parts of our buck leather clothes, gun and ammunition bags, and every scrap of eatable material, boiling it down in an Assinaboine basket with hot stones, and were finally reduced to buds and twigs. After many days of this extreme privation, no longer possessing strength to travel or hunt, I became discouraged and as we lay down one night I determined to abandon the struggle, and remain there, enduring with such fortitude as I might the final pangs which could not be long deferred. At this last stage in the struggle, an event occurred of the most extraordinary character, which cannot seem more strange and incredible to anyone than it has always appeared to me on the innumerable occasions when I have since reflected on it. Notwithstanding our exhaustion and desperate conclusion of the night before, F. rose at daylight, made up the fire as well as his strength permitted, blazed a tree near by on which he marked with charcoal a large cross, and carefully reloading and standing his gun against that emblem, proceeded to repeat in such feeble whispers as he was yet capable of, all the scraps of French and Latin prayers he could remember, to all which I was in no condition to give much attention. When he got through he remarked with much cheerfulness that he was now sure of killing something, and urged me to make one more effort with him, which I rather angrily refused, and bade him lie down and take what had to come, like a man. With cheerful assurance he replied that he was not afraid to die, but our time had not come. He knew he would find and kill, and we would escape all right. Then desisting from his useless effort to get me up, F., leaving his heavy snow-shoes behind, directed himself with weak and uneven steps down

the little stream in the deep gorge of which our camp was made, and never expecting to see him again, my mind relapsed into an idle, vacuous condition, in which external circumstances were forgotten or disregarded. But scarcely a few minutes had elapsed, and as it afterwards appeared he had hardly traversed a couple of hundred yards, when I heard his gun, which I knew never cracked in vain.

I had thought myself unable to rise, but at that joyful sound promptly discovered my mistake. I found F. in the spot from which he had fired, leaning against a tree in such deep excitement that he could speak with difficulty. On that rugged side hill apparently destitute of all life, in that most improbable of all places, within sound and smell of our camp, he had seen, not a squirrel or a rabbit, but a deer. Attempting to climb for a better shot, the deer jumped, and with terrible misgivings he had fired at it running. He had heard it running after his shot, but was sure he had made a killing hit. Scrambling with difficulty up the hill we found a large clot of blood and a morsal of 'lights,' which we divided and ate on the spot. After taking up the trail we soon found the animal.

I do not undertake to explain that astonishing circumstance. I suppose it must be regarded as an accidental coincidence, but it is of the kind that staggers one in the acceptance of that easy and common explanation. Its extraordinary character is most of all apparent to such as may from similar experience be able to realize the desperate nature of the situation. Two good hunters had ransacked the vicinity for miles without finding a living thing, and had tried in vain all the numerous resources known to the trapper, when a caribou, the wildest and most timid of all deer, walks right into camp, as one may say, at the last moment when further delay was death. How came he there? Where did he come from, and whither was he going? Where were his companions, and what attraction of company or food brought him into that wild and snowpacked gorge at that critical moment? No one can guess any plausible answers to such questions, though Francois believed, and till his latest breath will continue to believe, that after all human efforts had been put forth in vain, the holy Saint Francis, his patron saint, moved by his suffering and prayer, had himself bared an arm for our relief.

Francois, of course, had many tales to tell to justify his faith. A lifetime of adventure and association with superstitious Indians and pious and credulous half-breeds, had not failed to include many perilous dangers and escapes, and to establish an unswerving reliance on the sympathetic and simple priests, who in the humble frontier villages of Canada are the depositaries of all the mysteries of Nature and religion. Of the many such relations with which his memory was stored, the following, of which I have not the slightest doubt that all the facts were true, had firmly fixed in his mind the conclusion that dogs understand human speech.

Somewhere in the Big Horn Mountains, probably south of, and not far from the site of the present Yellowstone National Park, while travelling late in the fall with two other trappers, one of whom possessed a dog, an early snow-fall caused the loss of their horses, and not long afterwards they too found themselves in a country without game, and with most of the other usual resources for food covered up or cut off by snow. After some days of terrible extremity it was one night agreed to take another hunt next morning and if still unsuccessful, to kill the dog. But when morning dawned on the wretched camp the dog was gone, and was seen no more. Terrible sufferings and privations ensued, from which they only extricated themselves by living for a time on the 'jerked' flesh of one of their number. At last the survivors managed to effect a journey of several hundred miles on foot to Fort St. Vrain on the upper Arkansas, where almost the first thing they saw was the missing dog coming cheerfully to meet them! How he had travelled that distance alone through hosts of canine enemies, with every old bone and buffalo head covered deep with snow, is hard enough of explanation, but the cause of his disappearance offered no mystery to F., who fully believed the dog understood the conversation. While receiving contrary views and arguments with tolerance and politeness, it was plain enough that nothing would ever shake that settled conviction.

After passing safely through that period of starvation we were glad enough to get back to the old camp and make the best of it during the remainder of the season, which furnished little more of incident to vary the monotony of our solitary occupation. One or

the other occasionally got caught in a storm of snow, or still worse, of wind, but though sometimes thus long delayed on extremely curtailed diet, we always made shift to find or make some shelter and get back in safety at last. The cold was mostly intense, but being steadier and drier than on the plains, gave no great trouble till the diurnal thaws set in toward spring. As when these arrive it is already too late to catch marketable furs, we might have lain quiet but for our insufficient stock of pemmican and even of jerked meat, both of which became so reduced that we were obliged to hunt almost constantly without much regard to weather. Surface thawing by day, and freezing by night renders travelling equally difficult and laborious with or without snowshoes, since the crust becomes very slippery when they are used, and constantly fails and breaks through when dispensed with. The spring thaws also keep wet the 'duffeling,' or fur wraps worn inside the trousers and moccasins, causing chafes and sores, and sometimes dangerous frost bites.

By March, except in extreme northern latitudes, the marten's fur begins to deteriorate, and those taken after April the Company will not receive at all, so that in medium latitudes the trapper's work is over long before he can safely bring up the horses and get away with his pelts. Much of that interval we passed below in the foothills, where we reclaimed our horses safe, healthy and fat, and amused ourselves with trapping fish and hunting, enjoying our liberation from the gloomy mountain fastnesses, and the comparative abundance and variety of the fare. Falling in with friendly Assinaboines, who are the ancient friends of the trappers and mostly engaged in the same pursuit, we also enjoyed the pleasures of society, which are best appreciated by those who have been totally secluded during a long and dreary winter. It was perhaps not before the end of May, that the little patches of new grass in sheltered places along the streams were sufficiently forward to permit of commencing the long and somewhat risky journey required to dispose of our peltries. The Saskatchewan country, which enjoys the earliest spring and contains the best posts, bore at that time such a bad name for Blackfeet, that our Assinaboine friends insisted on travelling down Athabasca waters, even should

we have to go out on the plains as far as the big Forts Saskatchewan or Assinaboine, and we actually started with such intentions. The grass was short, the plains bleak, streams swollen, and the buffalo not yet arrived; and knowing nothing of the actual whereabouts of the hostile tribes, the long journey before us was by no means inviting. The Assinaboines were so demoralized, that we had even begun to doubt how far they could be depended on in case of a rush from some fleet mounted band of Surcees, Bloods, or Blackfeet, when we were overjoyed to learn of a temporary post established for just such emergencies, at no great distance.

CHAPTER XI

WINTER AND SUMMER IN FAR NORTHWEST

Several of the five tribes of the great Blackfeet nation, and especially the Surcees, frequently pushed their war parties as far north as the Athabasca and even the Peace, being often particularly alert in the spring of the year in order to pick up small parties of white or Assinaboine trappers coming out of the mountains with fur, and when they are more than usually enterprising, or when there is special reason to apprehend them, the Company's factors in charge of the large forts, sometimes establish temporary posts near the heads of the rivers for the safety of their trappers and their valuable furs. The parties sent out for such purpose, build block houses, and send out Indian runners with the information, often trading with both sides, though of course with many precautions to prevent hostile meetings. The Blackfeet, the boldest and most aggressive of all the tribes, are required to give several days' notice of their coming, and to make a solemn engagement to attack no one near the post. The time being fixed upon, runners are then sent out to keep away friendly, trading, or family parties; stock and other outside property is placed in security, and the Blackfeet received into the fort during the daytime only, a few at a time, and under such conditions that however treacherously disposed, they can only injure the individual who is trading with them. The trading is done through a small aperture connecting the store room with the Indian room, a small apartment holding but three or four at a time, with a single door operated from the inside, the whole top, bottom and sides being strongly built of logs. During the trading, a few men are stationed in the loft over the Indian room to shoot down between the logs of the ceiling if necessary. Of course a flank fire is arranged for on all external faces, and though rows and shindys often occur, and the temptation

is well nigh irresistible to the Indian, such posts have rarely been captured. After the trappers and friendlies have all come in and finished their trading, the post is emptied and abandoned, for the time, and the furs escorted down by a sufficiently large party, reinforced for the purpose.

At this small post we disposed of our furs which were good but not numerous, partly for reasons already given, and partly because the seat of our operations had been too near the Assinaboine country which has long been industriously trapped by those friendly people, and by the less enterprising white trappers who are content with fewer furs in consideration of greater security. They were sufficient however to satisfy our necessities and permit us to bear a modest part in the festivities which occur on the occasion of these annual reunions, which often afford quite romantic meetings and incidents. Men meet here who may have last seen each other years before at some far distant post, and have strange and stirring tales to tell of their own adventures, and perchance of the fate of mutual friends. On this occasion nothing very remarkable occurred, the talk being mostly of the whereabouts of the Blackfeet and their expected war party, respecting which there were innumerable rumors, but little definite information. F. and myself, having heard so much and seen so little of the threatened danger, felt very brave and inclined to think disrespectfully of the hostiles, as is not uncommon with those who have not themselves felt the fire, but the poor Assinaboines who better knew the risks, and were moreover embarrassed by the presence and care of their families, showed quite a different mood. Our intention was to try another winter in the mountains, selecting some less known and frequented territory to the north of last winter's trapping ground. But as there was yet plenty of time to attend to that, and the Assinaboines were very desirous to have our additional strength on their return journey, for which purpose they gave the most seductive accounts of the attractions of their safe mountain valleys, we concluded to begin the summer's holiday by travelling back with them, and without more definite designs, set out some time in July, the party consisting of only some half a dozen lodges besides ourselves. During this trip, notwithstanding the general appre-

hensions, we saw no worse enemy than buffalo bulls, and after a pleasant and uneventful journey, camped with our friends in a lovely valley well up in the foothills, where we enjoyed a delightful summer, reveling in all manner of abundance, and forming sincere attachment for our Indian neighbors, especially the children, who were never tired of being with us. We constantly made excursions to several lovely spring valleys in the high mountains, where the grass growing up to the edge of the snow was fresh and tender, and the deer and bighorn were as fat as prize cattle. As a great favor to them, we usually took some of the boys with us, who were useful about the camp, and as good as hounds in tracking down wounded game.

In this vicinity there were all sorts of game, fish, berries, and roots, and a considerable friendly rivalry occurred between us and the native hunters, all whose methods we had good opportunities for becoming familiar with. If I were to attempt a comparison, I should say that, while as a rule the Indian is the better hunter, the white man shoots better, and on the whole prevails best with large game, a distinction however which is traceable ultimately to the difference in weapons. When the Indian possesses firearms at all, which is the case with all the Assinaboines, who are among the best of hunters, they are only the wretched 'Hudson Bay Guns,' so-called, being the inferior and only firearm supplied by the Company, so cheap and bad that nearly all the barrels have been over and over again bent and straightened by the owners. A sure shot cannot be made with them even when new, at any reasonable distance, in consequence of which the old habits of bow and arrow hunting have been but little changed. Hunting, or finding game, and shooting it, are very different things. Anyone who has a good gun can soon learn to shoot, but to find the game, see it first, and make the best approach under circumstances never the same twice in succession, is an art taxing both physical and intellectual powers. It cannot be said to be ever completely learned even by the most expert hunter, who constantly acquires new experience; and men differ in success, just in proportion as they differ in intelligence, patience, temperament, judgment and many other qualities. From an habitual want of confidence in his weapon, the Indian has

learned any amount of caution, wariness and patience. He knows how to select the right places, decides quickly and with intuitive correctness how to make the best approach, and rarely fails to see the game first, but he will hunt it patiently for half a day, and refuse many chances that a white man would accept without hesitation, before he will peril all by a shot. But when at length his judgment is satisfied to risk it, he is sure to be within a few yards, where even with his weapons he can hardly miss. Outside the buffalo range, deer, moose and elk are the Indian's favorite game because by skill and patience he can get close and sure shots at them; but bighorn and mountain goats, which must generally be shot at long distances, they rarely get except by watching favorite passes or watering places.

With the modern, long range breech-loaders now in use, it seems to me little hunting skill can be required, and but a minimum of the pleasure of conquest enjoyed, since it must be a greenhorn who cannot get within such distances of almost any game. But on the other hand, the fascinating charm and delight of measuring one's judgment and skill against the instincts of these wild creatures, and quickly seizing the advantages of wind, hills, ravines, timber and other fortuitous circumstances to get close upon the wary game, and above all, the interesting knowledge of his most private and domestic habits, thus and thus only, to be gained; all these must remain unknown to the hunter who pulls his trigger at telescopic range. There can be few hunters who do not derive a keen delight from observations of the manners and habits of animals rarely seen at leisure, and fewer still who in coming close and unsuspected on a herd of large game, have not held back their shots in the intense interest of noting those natural and untrammelled movements of feeding, playing and fighting. But all that must be lost to the man who fires from several hundred yards' distance, thus substituting for the finer and more intellectual qualities of the hunter the mere mechanical skill of aiming at a mark.

Be that as it may, there were few kinds of hunting, snaring, trapping or fishing that we failed to have a hand in during that idle summer, and when the time came to start northward,

notwithstanding our former experience of the disadvantage of a late arrival, we had no little difficulty in breaking away from surroundings so comfortable and attractive. Nevertheless, getting at last upon the line of march, we plodded on along the base of the mountains, keeping close to and sometimes within that great storehouse of supplies and place of refuge in case of necessity. Unlike the west-bound streams issuing from the Cascades and the Sierra Nevadas, which flow in nearly straight courses with few tributaries to the sea, the great continental rivers of the Rocky Mountains linger long in the vicinity of their solitary sources, returning often on their courses, finding their rapid but sinuous way among and parallel to the ranges, and gathering a vast number of tributaries before they at last leave the snowy ranges for good, and flow forth into the far-stretching yellow plains.

The Missouri, Saskatchewan, Athabasca, Peace and Liard on the east, and the Columbia, Thompson and Frazer on the west of the mountains, each drains many hundred lineal miles of the great range, flowing in turn toward every point of the compass, and receiving almost innumerable tributaries, many of which are themselves large, long and numerous branching rivers. So countless are the streams coming down to swell the Athabasca, Peace and Liard, on their long courses to the Polar Sea, and so various are their initial directions, that it is often difficult to know when one has definitely exchanged the waters of one of them for another. Passing all the tributaries of the Little and Big Smokies of the Peace, we got through the main range by a rough and difficult pass for horses, made by a principal northern branch of the last named, and soon found a good valley for horses on the western side, where though the climate is supposed to be milder than on the eastern side, the furs are in no respect inferior, and the Indians as a rule less aggressively formidable. Nevertheless, in the course of this long journey we were not without various Indian encounters, some of which seemed destined at first to involve dangerous and unequal combats, which were in the end, for the most part, happily avoided. One of these, which may be worth relating, seems ludicrous in looking back, though it was regarded as extremely embarrassing and serious at the time.

In riding over the extensive plateau of a flat-topped mountain one afternoon, with the unladen pack horses following behind, we came suddenly upon two women endeavoring to conceal themselves in the thin undergrowth, and as they were encumbered with large conical baskets, strapped on in the usual way, we had them both lassoed and secured in an instant. They could not or would not understand any word or sign, and doubtless expecting a speedy and certain death, assumed an air of stolid and hostile indifference, absolutely refusing to have any participation in our efforts for intelligible communication. It was impossible to guess what they were doing with baskets, as neither roots, nuts or berries were to be looked for in such a locality; but they were evidently at no great distance from their people, who might be brought about our ears in a few minutes should the prisoners be allowed to escape. We therefore took them along for the present, but as we might at any moment be taken *flagrante delictu*, we exerted our best fascinations to atone for the rudeness of leading them with rawhide riatas on their lovely necks. In the course of two or three hours we came down to the banks of a fine stream with some grass, and turning out the animals, sat down to consider how to get safely rid of our embarrassing captives. Of course the readiest solution that would have occurred to many in our situation was to kill them and conceal the bodies, but we could by no means make up our minds to that. To leave them gagged and bound was only another and crueller way of reaching the same result, and was equally set aside. They must be already missed, and the earliest dawn would surely set the entire hive buzzing in pursuit. Amusing as the conundrum now seems, its solution was fraught with such momentous consequences to us, that we sat up the whole night in the vain effort to devise some means of getting safely out of the scrape. Finally, the best plan we could think of was the simple one of getting our horses saddled up before daybreak, and after seeing the ladies fairly started up the hill they had come from, to follow down the river a mile or two, cross it, and take up a practicable looking hollow on the opposite side. It is unnecessary to add that the next few days we did not spare the horses, and allowed many lengthening miles to grow out behind us, before we

deemed ourselves clear of their tribe, and safe from pursuit. In such rencontres the principal safety of the trapper consists in the fact that with the exception of a few considerable nations of allied tribes, nearly all the remote tribes infesting the trapping grounds, are small in numbers and at war with most of their neighbors, who thus mutually confine each other to a limited territory, beyond which they trespass at their peril. Thus if a trapper has difficulty with one of these small tribes and can get safely clear of its jurisdiction, it may be a long time before the news can follow him into a hostile tribe only a few miles distant. As has before been intimated, there is a certain skill in keeping clear of Indians, even in their own haunts, by avoiding routes and lines of country they are likely to follow. To do this successfully requires a knowledge of Indian peculiarities as well as of the intricacies of mountain travel, and notwithstanding all such wary precautions, one may sometimes come plump on a hunting or travelling party, as occurred to us somewhere during this same journey.

It was near the close of the day, and we were following down a big ravine by a well marked deer or Indian trail high up along its precipitous side hill, expecting from the appearance of the country to debouch on some large stream with grass, when we were startled by finding an Indian horse standing alone on the trail, saddled, and tied to a bush. This, like Robinson Crusoe's strange footstep, was embarrassing. Events ultimately showed that we were even then watched, and if like honest travelers we had let that horse alone and passed on, we should have been followed to camp, surrounded and attacked at night, with an uncommon poor chance for escape. But though we did not then know we were watched we did know that our fresh trail would be at once detected by whoever should come for the horse, so as it was as well to be 'hung for a sheep as a lamb,' we took the horse along with us. At this, a fellow who had been concealed in the ravine below, appeared from the brush and commenced bawling for his friends. We might easily have disposed of him, but as it was plain we were near a hornet's nest of unknown dimensions, we simply dropped the innocent cause of the trouble and passed on, looking for a good defensive position. We had scarcely gone a hundred yards before

a dozen or more came tearing down from the mountain above, and as it was impossible to get away we prepared to negotiate, or sell our lives dearly. There is little doubt that our lives were saved at this juncture by reaching at the nick of time a large flat rock over which the trail passed, which showed a vertical scarp of four or five feet toward the ravine. Hastily tying our horses in threes, we jumped down and took position behind this natural breastwork and got ready for business, determined not to begin hostilities but to meet them promptly.

The enemy were a hunting party and not a war party, but all the same they came rushing and bawling through the brush, and were within a few feet when the strength of our position was suddenly revealed to them and they halted all in a heap. White men in their position would have obeyed some leader, who would have amused us till a flanking party could have been sent out to cross the ravine, get up the opposite side and pot us from there safely and at lesiure. But our friends had neither the leader nor the weapons to permit of so rational a plan. Their arms were bows and arrows, with two or three 'Hudson Bay guns,' which at long range were little better. The descent from our position to the bottom of the ravine may have been eight or nine hundred feet, and was extremely precipitous. To take us out of our stronghold with their short range weapons, a front attack must be made, which was feasible enough with their numerical superiority, but would certainly cost dear, so notwithstanding their noise and insults we succeeded before long by the aid of a few Indian words and some Chinook, but principally by signs, at which all male Indians are intelligent, in getting into communication, peaceful at least in form. The horse act was explained as well as that rather bald depredation admitted, friendship professed, and the intention alleged of camping at the mouth of the ravine to make peace with them at leisure.

They were no whit behind us in professions of friendship and affection, but insisted on our coming up from behind our rock for a talk, which we agreed to on condition they would fall back and leave six feet of clear space between us. This was done, but they soon took advantage of the noise and confusion to crowd in on

the neutral ground, and began to pass in their few guns to the front-rank men. F. was captain, and had already notified me to be ready to jump down again behind our rock, when I noticed a stout fellow opposite and within arm's length of me, holding a gun which he had not possessed an instant ago, at 'present arms' with hand on the lock, with which he might blow my head off by a single motion if so disposed. As F. had his own hands full, and I dared not remove my eyes a second from my *vis a vis*, I quietly cocked my pistol without raising it or moving my rifle, which latter I could not depend on for instant use since too many were ready to grab it. My big friend opposite was never in all his life nearer to losing it than at that instant, for I was watching his face and at the slightest change of his glance or swelling of a muscle he would most surely have started for the happy hunting grounds. He was not unaware of the state of the case, for hearing the click, he immediately turned round and ostentatiously handed his gun to the man behind him, making signs to me to uncock the pistol, which I did after again getting a few feet of space cleared in front. Such incidents occurred several times during this exciting colloquy. The front-rank men, who would have been the first to suffer, we could get along with by themselves, but they were pushed and urged on by the fellows behind, everyone of whom was constantly bawling at the top of his voice and held his bow ready bent, with arrows drawn to the head.

This agreeable conference must have lasted half an hour, during which we held our lives from second to second, and only by the most constant watchfulness. We dare not even glance behind, whence I expected momentarily to get an arrow in the back from such enterprising individuals as might be climbing up the precipice in our rear. Finally, as it would not be possible to stand the strain much longer, and we were nervous respecting the vulnerability of our rear and the approaching darkness, we resolved to bring things to a point, and put the question directly whether they wanted to fight where they were, or make peace and come to our proposed camp next morning to trade. We were their good friends but were ready for either, and our "little guns (pistols) could talk without stopping." Nothing is more certain that the ardent

desire of our noisy friends to cut our throats and get possession of our horses, arms and scalps, and if they could have screwed themselves up to the certainty of a broad gap of destruction among their front-rank men, they must have succeeded at some price. But like most Indians, though brave enough in their own way, they were not game for it at the cost, preferring negotiation and postponement for a better or less expensive opportunity. An exceedingly unsubstantial truce was therefore effected, they agreeing to retire a few yards, and allow us to proceed without being followed by any of their young men, and to come down with their head chief to trade next morning after sunrise. Neither party had the slightest intention of keeping the agreement, and both were well aware of it. Nevertheless, after an immense amount of shouting, talking and threatening, each of us alternately facing about every few yards to cover the retreat of the other with the horses, we at last got clear of them, reached the mouth of the cañon, and as soon as it was dark, probably just about the time they were getting ready to surround us in the brush, we swum the river, got into the mountains beyond, and halted for no trifle till we had put a few days' journey between us.

It was not without many similar adventures, mostly however of less exciting character, that we made our way over such an extensive region and prosecuted the search for a winter location which should offer better promise than that of the previous year. Many a weary day passed before we found what we wanted with its concomitant advantages of horse-quarters, hunting-grounds, and so forth, but this time we took ample time for preparation, and when we had once settled down in winter quarters, encountered scarcely an incident worth mentioning during the solitary months that we had to spend in the gloomy seclusion of the snow-covered mountains.

We had plenty to eat, no Indian alarms, but little persecution from the carcajou, and bouncing luck with our traps. With the exception of the ordinary vicissitudes of that severe climate, and getting caught and detained away from the camp by an occasional storm, we had little to complain of, and the long cold winter was over and signs of breaking up apparent almost before we knew it.

At my present declining period of life, after a long succession of efforts and associations of such totally different character, I sometimes try vainly to remember how I ever managed forty years ago to endure and even enjoy the privation, cold and solitude of winter in those gloomy northern forests, for objects that now seem so trivial. But the continuity of occupation and purpose has been so broken and destroyed, that I can now scarcely realize even the problem, much less any reasonable solution. In recalling such forgotten incidents as recur to me from time to time, it requires a distinct intellectual exertion to remind me that it is really my own and not some other person's life that is ever rising up with long forgotten incidents from the dim and receding vista of the past.

In the region where we found ourselves, the winters break up late, though the process itself is short, vegetation pressing close upon the receding snow. We supposed ourselves nearly equidistant between Fort Liard on the river of that name, and St. John and Hudson's Hope on the Peace, but all those posts were only to be reached over mountain trails which it was scarcely probable could be traversed by laden horses before July. There were other posts in the Cascades and on the streams discharging from them into the sea, but they lay beyond a wide stretch of country unknown to us, and far from any course we wished to take. Besides, I was beginning seriously to reflect that I had had fun enough, and as for business, surely it was time to use my youth and such education as I possessed to better advantage than in rivaling Indians and half-breeds in the occupation of savages. Hence I determined to return to California, and F., always amiable and agreeable, readily consented. For this purpose it was necessary to carry our skins to some place within or adjacent to the American frontier, where only they could be converted into horses or money, the Company only receiving them in trade. Our horses being in excellent condition it was therefore determined to get the furs out of the mountains on hand-sleds as far as some point to which the animals could be brought, and then head for the far south and a cash market, even if the quest should carry us to the lower Columbia, a distance by any practicable route of many hundred miles.

This plan being resolved on, no time was lost in putting it in execution. The skins were got out in fine condition, the horses taken up, the gear put in good order, and long before the mountain defiles were passable for horses, we were clear of them, and away *en route* for the lower Columbia, where there was little doubt we could find a practicable market, and push on for the Oregon and California mines. The scheme, although in breach of the laws of the Company, which require their free trappers and *coureurs des bois* to trade with it alone, did not seem unfair to anyone, and we had no doubts of its feasibility. We could readily avoid all Company posts, and it was improbable we should meet its travelling parties so early in the season, or be interfered with by them if we kept our own counsel. To observe the law strictly would condemn us to the trapper's life forever, since the Company's trade articles had little value outside of its own territory, and even there, only to trappers and Indian traders. As long as we were anywhere north of the Columbia, our trade might well be designed for some of the lower posts of that river, and once across it, the Company possessed little authority, and we should soon be among American settlements. Our journey was at first rapid and successful, notwithstanding the high streams and swampy bottoms, and some severe spring snowstorms, which caused trouble and anxiety for the horses. Avoiding all Company posts, and evading the Indian marauders we most feared, we had covered more than two-thirds the distance to the lower Columbia, and left far behind all the dangers and obstacles we had expected to encounter, when we suddenly came to grief when it was least looked for, at a place and in a manner there was scarcely any just reason to anticipate.

We had got clear of the upper Frazer and Thompson; had crossed the divide south of the latter, and were travelling down a stream of considerable size which we took for a headwater of the Okanagan, or its lakes. The Indians in that country, though professing friendship with strong parties, were considered unreliable and dangerous to small ones, but as we were getting well down toward Fort Okanagan, and within the sphere of its probable influence, we thought no more of such difficulties, and took the shortest and easiest route for the main stream, taking little heed of

any trouble ahead except the necessity of evading the fort itself at the proper time. But we reckoned without our host. Hostile signs appeared and soon became abundant, showing suspiciously large parties close at hand. Examination showed that these were either war parties or hunting parties of greater magnitude than usual, disclosing no sign of women, children, dogs, lodges or other evidence of ordinary domestic life. Finally further study proved that we had been actually seen and avoided by small parties on at least two occasions. Mischief was then evidently intended, and our every move was watched. Even then we might perhaps have cached our packs, killed or abandoned the horses and escaped, since an expert mountain man unencumbered with horses and packs can go where a wolf can and is about as easy to catch. But we had no notion of sacrificing our property so easily, nor of making a long and tedious return journey to recover it at some future time, and in short stuck to it so pertinaciously that we not only lost everything, but had an uncommon close call for our lives.

Supposing ourselves on Okanagan water and every hour getting nearer to that river and the fort which must have a more or less wide circle of friendly influence; and knowing that since we had been seen it was too late to take to the mountains with loaded horses, we pushed on all the faster, when smoke columns began to be visible in the rear, on both flanks, and at last in front. We were surrounded, and the attack itself was only a question of time, reserved till place and time should suit the ideas of Indian strategy. There could no longer be any thought even of concealing the packs, as of course keen-eyed scouts were by this time watching every motion. When the hostile signals at last appeared in front, it was well toward evening, and we were pushing down a fair trail along a good-sized river with high mountains on both sides, but with signs of a break in the latter not far ahead and between the signals and ourselves. In pushing for this break, we observed a fresh tree-mark so carelessly made as to indicate almost indifference whether it should meet our eyes or not. It was made with charcoal on a fresh blaze, and consisted of two arrow-heads point to point, with a small vacant space between, on which a short vertical line was interposed considerably nearer to the arrow

pointing against us. This indicated that the intercepting party was in satisfactory position close in front and wished the pursuing party to drive us forward upon them and close in on us from the rear.

Anyone but an experienced mountain man reading this sign, the meaning of which was plain enough, and knowing his pursuers were intended to see it within a few minutes, would probably have abandoned the animals at once and attempted one of two desperate expedients, neither of which had any chance of success at this stage, viz., either to attack and cut away to the rear through the pursuing party as presumably the weakest, or to seek a passage over the mountain between the flankers. But F. reasoned differently. True, there was now little hope of saving anything but our lives. But night was coming on, and therefore time gained was important. The break ahead where the attack was probably to be made was not far off. It could be no worse for us to be attacked there than to precipitate a fight now, while night if it came first, offered a hundred chances which could not exist by daylight. Obliterating the mark, therefore, we kept on at a moderate gait, and about dusk came out at the break in the mountains we had been so anxiously looking for. This proved to be the entrance of a small side-stream coming in from the right, with a long and wide bottom which at some former time had been dammed near the mouth by beavers, converting the whole valley into a swampy pond half a mile wide, and extending back a considerable distance among the mountains. It was pretty certain the destined place of attack was at the opposite bank, where we were to be stopped and closed upon from all sides when emerging in more or less confusion from the water. Though not a soul was yet to be seen, there was little doubt that the opposite bank was well held and the party in the rear would not long delay falling on us from that direction.

The large level bottom before us, though in some places merely marshy, was mostly covered by shoal water with a large number of small brush-covered knolls or islands extending along its center and considerably interrupting the view across. It was now rapidly falling dark, and there being little time for examination or

reflection, we plunged in without delay, deciding to make our stand on and among the islands, at least for the present. The depth varied from one to three or four feet and though embarrassed by holes and inequalities of bottom we reached the islands by the time it became quite dark. These, though but a few yards each in extent, were numerous and well covered with brush growing ten or twelve feet high. The position was a strong one for the present, since we could not be surprised, the splashing in the water in case of attack being sure to give us ample notice, and the thick brush forming a covert from which we could not be routed without giving a pretty good account of ourselves. We therefore unpacked the animals, and were left in peace through the night, the horses munching bushes in the absence of grass.

The light of morning dawned on a scene as peaceful and solitary in appearance as any painter's ideal landscape. Not an enemy was to be seen, nor the faintest sign of morning camp fires, or any other human presence. It was a lovely morning of spring, the buds of all colors everywhere bursting into life, and already large enough to give practical value to our brushy screen. We were, beyond doubt, surrounded in strong force, yet the distant banks on either hand were, to all appearance, as lonely and silent as if no living thing existed within a hundred miles. The day passed without disclosing much, but there was an ominous avoidance of both shores by ducks and other large birds and glimpses had been obtained, at different times, of two hostiles on the bank we had quitted, and a flash or two had been caught from some bright object on the other shore. From the attention and inclination to neigh, of our horses, it was inferred that strange ones were not far off, but not one was seen or heard. At this distance of time—forty years—I cannot be sure of details, but several days, probably four, passed by with little incident except the occasional disclosure of some incautious Indian on one bank or other. The horses were failing for want of proper food, and though for ourselves we had dried meat to last some time, and might have existed indefinitely on the horses and furs, we felt that something must soon be done. It was plain the Indians' original little plan was upset and they would not attack us where we were; but unless

occupied in devising some other scheme, they could afford to wait forever, as all the resources of the country were open to them, while we must come out some time. Whenever and however our attempt should be made, we must abandon horses and packs. The former were now too exhausted to be of immediate use, even if extricated, but the furs were in perfect order, and not only represented a winter's hard labor among the northern snows, but had been since transported with infinite labor, across plains, rivers, mountains and deserts, nearly or quite a thousand miles.

Nevertheless, they must be sacrificed, so they were sunk with stones in the adjacent water—where I presume what is left of them still remains—while the horses were quietly killed one by one with knives so as to conceal all intention of movement from the watchful foe. A rendezvous was fixed upon, as usual in such cases, and about midnight, after the young moon had set on a cloudy night, we abandoned the refuge which had served so well, and struck out separately by different routes, arranging to strike the opposite shore at points far removed from each other, and if we should get safely out, to keep along down the river on the side hill as less likely to be closely watched. There was probably a principal channel to be crossed somewhere, but in the absence of any knowledge of its locality or depth, we drew our rifle-loads before starting, and arranged to protect and make quick use of the ammunition if required.

It was with very doubtful forebodings, in fact with not much hope of escape, that when all was ready and F.'s last prayer was said, we turned from each other, as we could not but fear for the last time, to attempt the almost desperate enterprise before us. No doubt a hundred keen eyes and ears were on the watch for any indication of our movements, and it seemed a forlorn and almost hopeless effort to move slowly and noiselessly through the tell-tale water, ignorant of all before us, and nearly certain of detection either in the water or on shore by so many eager watchers. I lost sight of F. almost at once and after a cold, tedious and muddy wade, the difficulties of which were much enhanced by the necessity of absolute silence of movement, I landed nearly a mile above our recent abode, F. having taken his course still further up the stream. There was no evidence as yet of any alarm, and we were

no doubt much aided by the Indians' expectation of hearing the movement and splash of horses. I soon got on the mountain side, took off and wrung the water from my clothes, loaded my gun, and moved cautiously on. Not a sound could be heard from any quarter, a silence that augured well for F., and I slowly made my way along the rugged side hill, aware from the absence of any alarm that Francois was doing the same at no great distance. After an hour or two, deeming myself clear of the worst of the crowd, I put on more speed, and by daybreak, notwithstanding the bad ground and cautious movements necessary, had put some twenty miles behind me, and considered it safe to get up on the high ridge where I could travel twice as fast. All now depended on when the Indians would discover our absence from the islands, If they should give us another day we should have a long start of them. Before noon I discovered a mark¹⁴ made by F. which showed he was before me on the same ridge, and it was needless for me to leave more marks for him. I pushed forward to overtake him all day and most of the following night, but toward morning, fearing I might overrun the rendezvous, I halted and got some much needed rest. At daylight I ventured down on the main stream and followed it, as agreed, to the mouth of what I considered the 'first large branch,' where I was delighted to find another mark by F. and turned up it about five miles, according to arrangement, where I found him and we were again together.

In the absence of any knowledge respecting the tribes and boundaries of this district we could not yet consider ourselves safe from pursuit, and with as little delay as possible got back on the high ridges, and pushed on for some days longer. We did not go to the fort as it was no longer necessary, and we should have had some trouble in explaining our presence in that vicinity with furs taken in the far-off districts of the Liard and the Peace, without exposing our intention of taking them out of the Company's territory. It was south of the Thompson, and somewhere in the high rolling region between the lower or main Frazer and the sources of the Okanagan, that we gradually assembled a party of

¹⁴ The marks agreed on as being readable by us but by no one else, were: a wind-fallen branch leaned against a tree in the direction being followed by the marker.

trappers, who like ourselves had been despoiled of their outfits in the same disturbed territory, where the unexpected outbreak had caught numerous parties travelling in with their winter's spoil from much nearer points than ours, and in fancied security. As usual, the suddenly assumed hostility of those Indians was due to the influx and depredations of the American settlers below, a circumstance which did not tend to mollify the hatred usually entertained for those gentry by the mountain men, upon whom in such cases the penalty falls first. Nevertheless, the first efforts of these impoverished men must be devoted to placing themselves again in a position to travel. Wherever their new plans might lead, whether back to the northern regions to try it again, or to the now far-famed and constantly extending mines beyond the Columbia, it was useless to try to get anywhere without horses, and the only way to procure any was to take them from the Indians of the plains. The extensive region lying between the Frazer, the Thompson and the upper Columbia, abounding in lakes and streams, and everywhere intersected by small mountain ranges and protective hills fairly supplied with grass, was then occupied by numerous small tribes of equestrian Indians, at this time hostile to all whites, even including the Company men, who were known to possess large bands of horses. Our force had increased to eleven, all expert mountain men smarting under their undeserved losses, and these destitute and desperate men were not long in devising a raid upon the horses in the hope of running off a band of them toward the growing settlements on the Cowlitz, the Chehallis or the lower Columbia.

Most of us soon picked up horses enough for mounts, but to make good our losses, not to mention injured feelings, it was necessary to discover and run off a large band, and it was to that effort we now devoted ourselves with all the skill, tenacious purpose and patient perseverance which characterizes mountain men when those well known qualities are brought to bear upon a single purpose. The Indian habit is to keep a few horses about their villages for current use, but the main herd, whether together or divided, is always kept at a distance under sufficient guard relieved at considerable intervals. As the numerous tribes are always

stealing each other's horses, much concealment and strong guarding is required, and it is not easy to find a large band without exposure to the numerous active scouts and hunters always on the watch. Should the raiders' presence be discovered directly or by their sign, unless strong enough to fight the whole tribe, they would be promptly hunted down and exterminated. It is therefore difficult for one not experienced in such enterprises to realize the extent to which our movements were fettered and embarrassed by the paramount necessity of exciting no alarm and leaving no trail or sign. In vain we separated and singly and in squads searched wide reaches of country, tracking down without result the numerous broad horse trails which abounded everywhere but led to nothing, and coming together again at some distant rendezvous always with failure and disappointment, every day adding to the danger of discovery and disaster. The innumerable expedients resorted to would only be fatiguing in the narration, though one of them which came near extinguishing me personally, may serve as a sample. Two of us undertook the rather desperate scheme of concealing ourselves by night in an extensive willow swamp or thicket abounding with springs, where the inhabitants of a large neighboring village came throughout the day for water, with the hope of capturing a prisoner and getting information. At early dawn the women began to arrive, but always in squads and often accompanied by children and dogs, from whose sharp noses and prying eyes we were in perpetual peril without the possibility of getting away till night should again interpose its friendly curtain. We were several times discovered by the dogs who raised a frightful clatter, but which we could not catch and dared not shoot. Fortunately for us the place was swarming with rabbits, which saved us by getting credit for the dogs' excitement. No beaten general ever longed more earnestly than we for the screen of night, and when its friendly shades came down, we were glad to retire, baffled in purpose, but satisfied to keep whole skins. In ordinary war the scout or picket may at the last moment surrender without loss of honor and save his life, but in Indian warfare it must be victory, escape or death, without thought of quarter given or received.

CHAPTER XII

RETURN TO THE MINING REGION

The most exciting as well as the most disastrous part of that reckless undertaking was yet to come. We must have wasted some weeks to little purpose, when a scout came in with the exciting news of a large band of several hundred horses, some thirty miles distant, easily accessible, though watched by a strong guard whose numbers he could not ascertain. We had trailed their relief guards destined for this place at least twenty times, but hitherto with no result, as they always took a false direction, scattered, and ran the trail out to nothing, meeting again at some distant rendezvous, before venturing to the right place. The relieved guards were still more baffling as they invariably came in singly or in pairs, and from every point of the compass. Thus the whole country had become covered with horse trails leading in every direction and impossible to unravel, especially as while they could only be followed by daylight, detection was certain death. But our scout had at last been equal to the occasion, and not a second was to be lost in following up the welcome intelligence.

Quickly getting up our own horses, we were not long in making a descent on the long sought herd. Coming down on them a little after midnight with a wild rush, we succeeded in making a general stampede in the direction agreed on, some of our party leading the way, and the others pressing on the rear. What with our yells and gunshots and the thundering rush of horses, the guard, probably exaggerating our number, fled at once, and notwithstanding the skillful disposition of a small rear guard of our own, we saw no more of them. The horses were wild and terror-stricken, and to keep them in that desirable state of mind, they were kept on a full run whenever possible, halting only to change saddles to fresh

horses. By midnight of the next day a long stretch of ground had been covered and the horses were tired enough, but we were well used up ourselves, and after a run estimated at over a hundred miles in the twenty-four hours, rest and sleep must be had. Already hard-worked before the start by constant scouting, the riding and driving had been continuous and exhausting, and when I dismounted I could scarcely stand, my legs were excoriated and raw, and my buck-leather trousers glued fast to them with blood. Few others were in better condition, and the immediate and peremptory necessity for all was sleep, which was so pressing that we took barely time to change saddles to fresh horses, go through the form of sending three men to the rear on guard, and appoint a rendezvous in case of disaster, till every man was asleep, holding fast by the bridle of his fresh horse. The halt was made in the densely timbered fork of a large stream, the horses being driven into the angle enclosed by the river on two sides, and the camp on the third. We only proposed to rest a few hours, reasoning that as the Indian guard must go thirty miles to the village for men and horses, and return by way of their late horse camp, we must have had a sixty-mile start; but on the other hand, the pursuers were fresh and our trail was so broad it could be followed at a gallop. Should we get off again safely, it was the intention of our leader, McTavish, to leave a few men to delay the pursuit at the crossing, while the rest should gain time with the horses.

The plan was good, but the men who were to carry it out were already overtaxed. The guard probably yielded to the overpowering pressure of sleep which could not be resisted, and at all events were never heard of more. We could not have been down long when our pursuers overtook us and repeated our tactics of the previous day, dashing in with shots and yells to stampede the horses. In an instant I found myself alone in a tumultuous rush of horses, succeeding with the greatest difficulty in gaining the saddle, in fact only saving myself by claspings the horse's neck and being dragged through the rout till I could get a chance to wriggle on his back. Even then it was hard to prevent being crowded off, unhorsed, and trampled, as the crowd of terrified

and frantic horses pushing on against those who vainly refused to take the water, piled up on each other, screaming, biting and kicking in a wild frenzy of terror. Judged by their shooting and yells a large body of Indians were pressing on them but could not penetrate the mass, which I verily believe were in places piled two or three deep.

The objection of the horses to take water was partly due to the intense darkness, partly to the furious current of the stream, and most of all to the dense growth of deciduous trees which, crowding out horizontally over the water in search of light and air, formed an extremely difficult obstacle on either bank. By dint of spur, I forced my horse onward, over and through the tumult to the bank, and out upon the obstructions through which he at last fell headlong into the water, turning over in the fall nearly on top of, and spilling, his rider. By sticking to his mane, I urged him into the current of the river which was by this time full of horses, and quartering down stream, reached the opposite bank, and after infinite trouble and delay, scrambled through the *chevaux de frise* of timber, and gained the bank, still holding on desperately to horse and rifle. Here were already assembled many horses, while others were drifting down the stream, some no doubt drowned, and the main gang still crowding each other over and through the obstacles on both banks. Up to this time I had not seen a man of either party, but feeling tolerably sure of being joined by some of ours, my first care after getting my horse quiet, was to draw and reload my rifle which, of course, had got thoroughly wet. Before long, several of us had got together, and concluding the Indians had work enough for the moment, in securing the main body of horses which would soon be scattered by the current for miles down the river, we resolved to push for the rendezvous with as many horses as could be kept together. Nothing but useless danger to the survivors could be gained by fighting or remaining, and as nothing had occurred to make known our small number to the Indians, we hoped they would be content to recover so large a proportion of horses and abandon further pursuit, which turned out as anticipated.

Some of us riding in front as leaders, and others driving on

the horses from the rear, we carried on quite a number, and after a couple of days of hard riding reached the rendezvous agreed on, where in the course of a few days we mustered six men of the original eleven, and about seventy horses. We remained here in a fair hunting and grazing country during about ten days, scouting backward for many miles, but no more men came in, and the missing were not heard of again. Though McTavish himself was among the lost, yet to my intense joy and thankfulness, Francois was among the survivors of that disastrous night. After dividing the horses and somewhat increasing my share by means of the simple but insidious pastime of 'Monte,' the party broke up, as I wished to return to the States, and the others, including F., preferred to return to the territory and service of their beloved Company, which to the half-breeds is family, home, friends and country, all in one. I have never laid eyes upon or heard a word of any of them, from that day to this.

In the American settlements on the Willamette, I traded horses for young cattle to good advantage, and obtaining the aid of a village of friendlies from the upper Coquille, started to drive the cattle across the Calapooyas, and down to the northern California mines, a distance of several hundred miles through tribes of doubtful amity, most of whom, as the Coquilles, Umpquas, and Rogue Rivers, when sufficiently robbed, teased, persecuted and murdered by white settlers and U. S. Indian agents, afterwards became famous as hostiles, and inflicted severe losses even on Government troops, before they were subdued, or rather exterminated. Of course those Indians, being then little acquainted with cattle and settlers, were disposed to treat the former like any other game, and caused some anxiety to the owner of the herd, but otherwise this journey was one of the most delightful and entertaining I have ever made in any country. Game was abundant through most of the route, and kamas roots, berries and fruit were procured in large quantities by the women and children. The party including the last was quite numerous, ensuring easy work for all, and my friendlies, soon understanding the advantage of good pasture and easy stages for keeping the cattle content and in good order, developed into herdsmen as

skillful and reliable in some respects as if they had been bred to the business all their lives. In places where Indian relations were doubtful or bad, my people entirely relieved me of the laborious and sometimes perilous duty of selecting eligible routes, pastures and camps in advance, invariably smelling out the hostiles in time to evade them, and keeping me well informed of the surrounding country, though most of it was as new to them as to me. Though white man's cattle were quite new acquaintance they soon became fond of them, supplying endearing and poetic names to most, and watching over them with interest and solicitude not less than the proprietor's. The women did all the camp work and collected large quantities of food, filling up the intervals of spare time, in the sewing of trousers and moccasins. The men drove and cared for the cattle, watching them by day and night, and keeping me well informed of the country for many miles ahead. It is hardly necessary to say that I became much attached to these poor people, and would have trusted, and in fact did trust, everything I had to their affection and fidelity without hesitation. They well understood their own danger from white ruffians, and yet I have known one of them in search of lost animals by himself, to stick to them for nights and days, and finally bring them in safely at the risk of his life, for being unable to offer any explanation except with my aid, he would have been certainly shot if caught alone with cattle by some of the cowardly and bloodthirsty rascals who unfortunately are by no means rare among miners and settlers.

As it was impossible to think of taking these faithful friends into the settlements where they would encounter so many risks, and the time approached when I must part from them forever, I revolved in my head every possible and impossible scheme by which our friendly association might be continued. I even thought of procuring some breeding cattle, and searching out some secluded valley far out on the plains, where gradually, trained in the arts and arms but not in the rapacity and vices of the white man, some remote commonwealth might in time arise, far from the selfish and vulgar din of civilized life, to save at least some poor remnant of the persecuted and perishing natives of the soil. The

notion might not have been so very chimerical, could I have got hold of two or three reliable aides, like Francois for instance. Alas, poor Francois! The best, bravest and surest friend I ever possessed. Many a sad day and sleepless night have I regretted him, and I do surely hope and believe that far away in the northern wilderness he also may have passed some hours in thinking of the old comrade who trusted him so implicitly and loved him so fondly but can never see him more. Notwithstanding his affection for me, he entertained a theoretical hatred and distrust of 'Bostons,' or Americans, and after surviving the horse episode, could not bring his mind to following me across the hated border, preferring to return to a hard life and constant adventure in the far northern solitudes he had roamed so often.

Oh Bold and True,
In bonnet blue,
That fear or falsehood never knew;
Whose heart was loyal to his word,
Whose hand was faithful to his sword.

No, I could not remain always with my Indians, and there was no place where white men might be encountered, to covet their property and corrupt their families, that was safe to leave them at. Hostile tribes may be whipped, driven away, or conciliated, but neither resistance, nor docility, can hold or tame the rascally scum that ever floats first on the advancing wave of the white man's advance. The frontier abounds in cowardly, murderous wretches, who delight in robbing and maltreating the weak, when it is easy and safe, and notwithstanding the invaluable aid I should have had from my native herdsmen in California, I dared not take them any farther. I therefore left them encamped somewhere not far above the crossing of the upper Klamath, under the protection of 'Captain Jack' a famous Rogue River chief, while I rode on to obtain blankets, ammunition and so forth, to pay them off. This was at length effected to mutual satisfaction and after a most sentimental leave-taking, at which the men looked sober and the women wept, I rode sadly away and saw their faithful and loving faces no more. I had already hired some white men, who

answered the purpose but gained no such place in my affection as my untutored but faithful friends.

'Captain Jack,' who stood my friend on that occasion, was even then a well known character, but as a gallant leader of his people in the Rogue River War, afterwards filled all American newspaperdom with his fame. His territory lying on the main route between Oregon and California adjacent to the northern mining districts, the miners and prospectors soon came into collision with him, and after enduring numerous outrages and atrocities at their hands, he was forced into a hopeless war in spite of his earnest wishes, and for a considerable time kept the troops at bay and the trail closed. He was an energetic and able leader, measured by any standard, and long made the best use of the force which his small tribe afforded. A large number of regular troops, besides the comparatively worthless but murderous 'volunteers,' were accumulated against him, and after eluding them a long time and inflicting many losses and two severe defeats upon them, his tribe was at last exterminated or dispersed, and himself captured. With one of his principal subordinates, he was carried to Portland and shipped to San Francisco on a steamer, whose name I cannot remember but of which one Dall was master, in charge of a corporal and another soldier.

After the ship got clear of the bar their irons were removed, and when a day or two out of port, Captain Jack and his man determined to capture the ship, notwithstanding its numerous crew and a large crowd of passengers. Inhabitants of their distant mountains, they had never before even seen the sea; nevertheless, watching an opportunity, they one night, by a sudden attack, overpowered the guard and secured their weapons, and raising their war-whoop, commenced a desperate attack on the entire steerage. A wild panic ensued, the passengers making their way headlong on deck and leaving the two lone warriors in full possession below, from whence the entire gang of frightened fugitives were not game to take them. At last Captain Dall with his crew attacked them simultaneously from the fore and main hatchways, killed Jack's assistant and captured him bleeding from a dozen wounds. Then the cowardly herd, who had been driven on deck

and nearly frightened to death by two men, made a desperate attempt to kill him, and he was only saved by the determined courage of his captor Dall, who stood by him, pistol in hand, and at last got him into a safe place in his own cabin. Soon after his arrival at the Presidio at San Francisco, and long after my former acquaintance with him in his own country, I being then resident in that city, went out to the fort to see poor Jack and take him some small presents. As soon as he fairly identified me in my 'store clothes,' as the same roughly dressed mountain man he had formerly known, the remembrance of his old friends and lost home overcame him, his stoical demeanor gave way, and he could hardly contain the mixed and various emotions of his soul.

Though kindly treated by the army officers, he was depressed and despondent at his long confinement. He talked freely of his last exploit, and acknowledged that he had no expectation of escaping on that memorable occasion, but wished to die a warrior's death rather than be shut up in the 'strong house' at San Francisco. Nevertheless, from other of his remarks I inferred his idea was that if he could force the whites to jump overboard, the ship would drift ashore somewhere and afford him a chance to escape. What ultimately became of Jack, I do not remember, but have the impression that he died in confinement, which no Indian can endure long. His tribe, and I believe all the other tribes located near the great Oregon and California trail, now occupied by a railroad, have long since been exterminated, the celebrated Modoc war terminating in the expatriation of the few survivors; and the 'enterprising' settlers possess the lands they had enjoyed for centuries till the Great Spirit launched against them the curse of the white man and his Christianity.

Scott's Valley, where I now established my cattle camp, notwithstanding its great altitude, is a rich and lovely valley some thirty miles long and averaging perhaps three or four in width. It is traversed by the river of the same name, a large tributary of the Klamath, and lies at an elevation which ensures more or less frost during every month of the year. Nevertheless, it as well as all its lateral valleys extending deep into the hills, are covered with fine grass, and abound in two kinds of excellent wild fruit usually called

cherries and plums, from a fancied though distant resemblance to those fruits of cultivation. The river abounded with beaver, otter and fish, and the surrounding foothills were full of game in great variety. Across the head of the valley rose the lofty barrier of the Trinity Mountains, through and over which wound a rough and difficult pack trail to Redding's Springs (now Shasta City) at the head of the Sacramento Valley. On the west, ascending ridge above ridge, glistens the precipitous and snow-covered range of the Salmon River Mountains, and on the east is a range of low mountains free from snow at that season and full of game, separating it from the similar but less attractive valley of the Shasta, near the lower end of which is now situated the considerable mining town of Yreka.

Across the inaccessible and untrodden range of the Salmon River Mountains lay the heads of both branches of the Salmon River, whose remote and secluded mining region, extending along both forks for a distance of thirty or forty miles, sustained a scattered mining population of several hundred men. Having been well acquainted with the place and its wants two years previously, it was there I proposed to market my cattle. Except for the long and difficult trail from the coast, up the Klamath, which I had formerly so well known, it was then only accessible by a circuitous pack trail leading up from a point near the head of Scott's Valley, around the head of the range, through a high and rough pass—which, however, was clear of snow at that time of year—then following a long, deep-curving ridge to a junction with the Klamath trail, and descending by a steep decent of about ten miles to the ford near 'Best's tent,' the principal trading post on the river, in all about seventy miles. After leaving Scott's Valley there was no grass along the road or at Salmon River, and the packers were obliged to give their stock a feed or two of flour, or let them go hungry. To drive well-fed, strong and half-wild cattle from their accustomed pasture through such a rough country for that distance would require at least two days, and as any permanent corral constructed on the road would only invite Indian ambushes, a sufficient number of herders would be required to watch the cattle by night and frustrate their frantic desire to get back to pasture.

As there was no beef and little game on the Salmon, the market was too promising to neglect, so leaving the stock on grass, I started on foot to prospect a shorter route directly across the range even if only practicable for loose cattle. Following up a principal tributary of the Scott, I reached the snow in about twenty miles, passed over it for about six more, and then by a bad and rough descent of fourteen miles came down not very far above the highest camps on the Salmon, making in all about forty miles; which though mostly very rough, seemed practicable for loose animals provided the snow should be crossed early in the day before it became softened by the sun. In order to do this, it was necessary to start early enough to get well up to the bad part of the ascent by break of day, which under ordinary circumstances, barring accidents and soft snow, usually rendered it possible to get the cattle down to the foot of the pass on the other side by or before dark. I had two pretty good men herding the cattle, but neither of them could or would undertake to drive half-wild cattle forty miles a day on foot over a mountain pass bedeviled with snow and infested with Indians, so that part of the business fell to myself, and during the course of the summer I drove every one of those cattle, in lots of three or four at a time, across the mountain alone, butchered and sold them, and returned promptly for another lot.

Driving up the gulch was hard work, especially before the ravine became narrow, the cattle being desperately bent on getting away and returning. Taking them through the snow was worse, because when one of them bogged down and required help, I was interrupted by the constant necessity of watching and heading off the others. But after by hook or crook they were got over the summit and on the down grade I had my turn, and though it was the steepest, rockiest and worst of the whole, I had little trouble except from falls or when belated in crossing the snow. After getting down it was about six miles along a level but rocky bottom to the nearest miners' camp, where I built a strong corral. As the miners were prosperous, and gold-dust was plenty, I had no difficulty in disposing of the beef at a dollar a pound all around, the first-comers getting the best cuts. After shooting the cattle, the rest of the work was mostly done by the customers themselves,

who helped hang, skin, clean and cut up, a crowd being usually on hand by daylight on the days of killing, all willing and anxious to help in consideration of hearing the news from outside, and getting first chance at the beef. I occasionally met Indians on the mountain, or in the gulches on the west side, but succeeded in making friends with them by carrying small trinkets and being always ready for war, though I must say their company was not a pleasure, as they were regarded as unreliable or hostile, and they and the miners would kill each other without quarter whenever they met, rendering it a difficult sort of friendship for me to maintain.

During the whole season I think I lost but two animals, one by falling down a precipice, the other abandoned in soft snow. The work was severe for I wished to 'make hay while the sun shone,' and therefore wasted no time, but as it was extremely profitable and I had no intention of wintering there, I drove it hard, expecting to realize enough to warrant an early return to civilized life at San Francisco. Of course such a rough business could not be carried on without some adventures of my own, and some pretty serious ones to others who chose to charge theirs to me. I will relate some of the former first. One morning when I was absent on some business down the river, I found on my return that some steers which were to be executed next day had broken out of the corral and taken the back track. Knowing they could not very well get over the mountain without better management than their own, I started after them just as I was, wearing only leather trousers and flannel shirt, and armed only with a Colt's heavy revolver.

I followed their trail easily enough to the foot of the mountain, but at that place several gulches came in nearly together, all of which the runaways had explored either for grass or a practicable ascent of the mountain, and had so confused their trail on the rocky surface that darkness was coming on before I could unravel it. Seeing I would have to camp there for an early morning start, I cast about for a supper and soon marked down a pheasant which alighted in the small brushy valley of a creek coming in on the opposite side of the stream, which of course was here quite

small. When I reached the little valley which was only a few yards wide, I found it so densely covered with brush that it was difficult to traverse without noise, and as a small rivulet came down it, I took its bed which had been cut into the gravelly soil, the vertical banks being fully ten or twelve feet high. It is necessary to get pretty near a pheasant to kill it with a pistol, and I did not wish to lose my supper, so as I had marked mine down carefully, I resolved to follow the bed of the stream till I got close to the place and then rise cautiously over the bank to get a close and sure shot. The little branch was extremely crooked and sharp-cornered, and its bed full of boulders and rocks. In stepping along carefully on those to keep my moccasins dry, I turned a sharp corner and saw right before me, almost within arm's length, a large grizzly which had been squatting in the water but now rose to his full height, looking to my startled eyes about the size of a house.

My movements having been noiseless, in deference to the pheasant, I saw him first—in fact I do not think he saw me at all. His delicate sense of smell had, however, already sniffed an alarm, and he commenced looking about and sniffing while I held my breath and tried hard to pass for a stump or rock or anything but the guilty intruder that I was. I had my pistol in hand ready cocked for the grouse, and considered hurriedly and anxiously what would be the best use to make of it. Of course under the circumstances I did not feel the least quarrelsome, and was quite willing to 'let bygones be bygones,' if the bear would only be kind enough to take the same view. There was no possible escape without his consent, and to put a pistol bullet into him would have delayed him about as much as firing into a pine tree. So not knowing what else to do, I stood still, humbly waiting his majesty's pleasure, holding my breath and looking as unobtrusive as possible, resolved if he came for me to try and blind his eyes with the pistol and run back down the trap I was in till I could find a place to climb out quickly. Having a good opportunity of watching his small wicked grey eyes, I observed they wandered about and never once fixed themselves on me, and I do not think he distinguished me at all as separate from other inanimate

objects. Suddenly, and without the slightest warning that he had finished his reflections, he uttered a vicious growl and sprang up the bank, scattering down cartloads of gravel and crashing off through the brush. Certainly no one ever came, or could come, to closer quarters with a grizzly without actual collision, but except perturbation of mind, the only damage I suffered was the loss of my supper, to which I reconciled myself under the circumstances without much difficulty.

A circumstance occurred during this summer in connection with the new trail I had opened directly across the mountains, which brought some undeserved opprobrium upon me on the part of a few persons. Since my butchering operations had commenced two extremely sharp Yankees, whom I will call F. and S., had come in with a large pack train and established a new trading post near my camp at the head of the little settlement, which F. remained to administer, while the more active or adventurous S. operated the mule train with a lot of Mexican *arrieros*. His method was to make a round trip from Redding's to the head of Scott's Valley, and there leave his mules on grass while he with a couple of men rode over to see whether F. was yet in need of more supplies. If not, he would dispose of his merchandise on the Shasta or Humbug and repeat the trip. Everyone knew that habitually I made the trip to and from Scott's Valley in a single day, and though much questioned, I had refrained from encouraging anyone to attempt my route, especially with animals; and I suppose was generally credited with liking the monopoly of the good thing, which indeed I will not deny, for I certainly did not want any competition in the cattle trade, and in that respect was pretty safe from those who could only bring rival cattle in by the long trail.

I was therefore not much surprised when one day F. invited me to his trading tent to discuss with him and his partner the possibility of their pack train, which was then in Scott's Valley, coming in over my route. I told them it was certainly impracticable for laden animals, and I did not believe they could take even light mules over it, especially as it was not even marked out, since for fear of being ambushed by Indians I always varied the exact route

as much as the ridges and gulches permitted. S. evidently did not believe me, and boasting that he could go anywhere that I could, announced his intention of riding out over it at least, so as to see for himself. Of course, as I was not his guardian, it did not become me to say any more, having simply given my opinion in answer to his questions. F. then asked if I would be willing to describe the route, which I cheerfully did, taking the trouble to sketch it on paper, and warn him against the errors most likely to be committed by a man only acquainted with the mountains on beaten trails. S. accordingly departed and nothing more was heard from him for a week, I having in the meantime been over the mountain without seeing anything of him, when he returned to F.'s on foot, minus his blankets, mule, arms, and most of his clothes, scratched to pieces by brush and nearly starved to death. In this predicament F. sent for me and concealing the animosity which it appears he felt on account of my supposed bad faith in giving a misleading description, told me that S. had *cached* his valuable silver mounted Mexican saddle and bridle in a tree, and turned loose his mule in a certain place described with more or less accuracy, and asked if I could tell what mistake had been made, and especially whether I could find the mule and saddle, which had a value of several hundred dollars. After interviewing S., who was in bed and not in very good condition for talking—having had a narrow escape with his life—I felt pretty sure of the character and locality of his first error, and that if I could once pick up his trail after it diverged from the proper route, I could find the place where he had abandoned the mule, notwithstanding he insisted it was on the other side of the mountain. So, on F.'s solicitation, and more to justify myself than for any other reason I at last offered to find the mule and saddle for a hundred dollars, payable only in case of success, incautiously admitting that if I could find them at all, I could do it in a day. I had no desire to neglect my own affairs for any such job or reward, but there was a little pride mixed up in the matter. S. had come to grief in following my directions—or thought he had and the whole subject, especially my good faith with him, had become a favorite subject of discussion. I felt confident I could trace out the place and

manner of his error, for of course I knew he had never really crossed the range, as he believed and averred, but had gone up some wrong gulch and crossing some high ridge, erroneously taken for the summit, had come down another on the same side of the divide, an error before alluded to, which is common enough with inexperienced, or half experienced persons.

My proposition however was declined, and F. hired a couple of miners whose prospecting adventures had led them to overrate their accomplishments as mountain men, at ten dollars a day each. As they failed to discover anything, and their report only served to render the mystery still more opaque, another pair was hired with the same result, and at last as a dernier resort, my offer was accepted. Of course the job was now much more difficult than at first. The time elapsed had tended to efface such trail as there was, which had probably been additionally obscured by the wanderings of the two unsuccessful search parties, and there was no guessing where the mule might have strayed by this time after grass and water. I was strongly tempted to double my price, but did not, and started early next morning so as to get to the foot of the big range by the first light, and having my own ideas of the nature of S.'s blunder, soon found the gulch that had misled him. Up this he had toiled with the mule for some miles over and through the toughest obstacles, where I had no difficulty in tracing him after once getting on his actual track. He had at last got involved in a crooked, narrow cañon full of immense boulders and 'jump-offs,' where he had abandoned the mule and pushed on by himself. Here I found *cached* in a tree, as he had described, his saddle with lariat attached, and making a wide cast, soon discovered the ridge taken by the mule, who like all his kind had gone straight upward in search of grass, it being much easier to a mule to graze or travel upwards than downwards.

The animal's trail up the ridge, being on comparatively better ground, was well marked, and I soon found him in a small valley with grass some miles above the cañon where he had been abandoned. But the rogue had already become so saucy and wild I could not approach him near enough to throw the lariat, and after all my trouble, came near giving him up and returning for

assistance. But at last getting above him, I succeeded in driving him down the mountain, and having constructed a sort of rude pen or corral among the boulders in the cañon, caught and saddled him and leading him down the gulch to better ground, mounted and rode in to F.'s before dark. It was plain enough to see how and where S. had gone farther and irremediably astray after abandoning his mule, but having got the property I took no further heed of his tracks.

Now this was in reality a long and hard day's work, covering many miles of most difficult travel, but when F. pondered how quickly, and easily as it seemed to him, the mule had been traced and found, he was more than ever convinced that he had been designedly misled, and when I called for the money next morning he refused to pay and offered a less amount. Saying but little at the moment, though fully resolved to have the money from him dead or alive, I went down and consulted W., a very judicious friend of mine from Missouri, who stood high in public estimation and was an excellent judge of public opinion. Calling in a few other advisers, it was at length decided that I should go *alone* and compel payment, and if it came to a fatal collision, I should be sustained. This counsel was at once adopted, and F. in the midst of a number of his adherents and hangers on, paid down the money.

My friends saw me comfortably through with the public, and at their suggestion I offered to take a party up the mountain and demonstrate the precise spot and manner of S.'s blunder, but as no one cared to go, that proposition was allowed to drop, and as even those who chose to doubt my good faith in the first place, agreed that F. having recovered his valuables ought to pay what he promised, I believe I took no harm in public estimation, as I certainly did not in my own, which was of still more importance.

The county of Siskiyou (pronounced Sissikew) being then about to be politically organized, including the Salmon River country, a certain Virginian named Peters found his way in there during the summer, afflicted with an anxious desire to serve the dear public as county judge. As I knew everyone on the creek, and being in the habit of giving plenty of 'tick' to miners out of luck, did not stand badly with a public addicted to fresh beef, he begged me to

travel round with him to assist his canvass, to which I consented, and as he was a good-hearted, amiable fellow, soon grew quite intimate with him; and since he soon disappears from my narrative, I will here add that at the ensuing election, which occurred soon after I left the neighborhood, he was duly elected by an appreciative constituency, receiving and wearing the handle to his name that he coveted. But before that event it was necessary for him to visit other districts, for which the old circuitous trail still supplied the only route available for horses. This was at the time infested and watched by a lot of murdering white rascals disguised as Indians, whose facilities for ambushing the narrow mountain path were so good and had been so well used, that it was regarded dangerous for small parties. A number of persons waiting for a good chance had combined to go out with P. and the night before their departure a Dutchman, whom as I have forgotten his name I will call D., having accumulated his small pile, asked leave to join them, and as his camp was below the crossing—the others all coming from above—it was arranged that all parties should start at dawn of day, and get together somewhere on the ten miles of steep and difficult trail, which after fording the river led up to the top of the ridge.

P.'s party started as agreed, and had reached a point not far from the summit, P. himself walking ahead of the animals, without yet seeing D., whose tracks however showed him to be ahead, when high up on a distant horse-shoe-like bend of the ridge he was following, he caught sight of a man and called to him, taking him for the Dutchman. Instead of replying, the stranger instantly dashed down the precipitous side of the ridge, where he was lost to view in a moment, among the rocks and bushes. Not understanding the maneuver, and suspecting mischief, P. concealed himself till his friends came up, when all went forward to the suspicious spot. There they found D.'s horse unhurt and tied to a tree, his boot tracks on the ground being accompanied by numerous moccasin tracks all made by white men. (Indian tracks are so easily distinguishable by their small size and pigeon-toed direction that they cannot be imitated with any great success.) The party having no trail expert among them, could

make little of the sign, but as it was plain some mischief had befallen D., they sent back a messenger with the horse and all the facts they knew. About the time that messenger arrived, I was coming in from my new cattle trail, and was at once called on by the general voice to take a party up the mountain, pick up and follow D.'s trail and if possible capture or kill the robbers. I had driven half-wild cattle forty miles over a snowy range on foot that day, and wanted rest just then more than anything else, but as immense excitement prevailed and plenty of men offered to butcher and sell out my animals for me, I agreed to go and asked for five good men. Nevertheless, fifty volunteered and insisted on going, notwithstanding my objections that such a crowd, besides being noisy must necessarily overrun and obscure a trail made by anything short of a troop of cavalry.

The excessive excitement was not unnatural under the circumstances. The infested route was the only one by which miners who did not wish to be snowed in all winter could get away with the proceeds of their summer's work. There was not a house or resident on it, till it came down into Scott's Valley, seventy miles distant. Communications were infrequent, and as everyone robbed was invariably killed, definite intelligence of their fate was rarely received; all that could be certainly known, being the negative fact that news of their arrival at Scott's Valley never came back. Now, therefore, that there seemed a chance of tracking down and catching some of these common enemies, everyone wanted to help, and as all my gallant volunteers insisted on going, we started before break of day next morning and reached the spot by sunrise, the sign sought for being then only one day old. As I had anticipated, it was only possible to get a glance at the sign before it was obscured and confused by the unruly crowd. Nevertheless, the story being simple could not easily be mistaken as far as the sign went.

The horse trail at this spot was split into an old and new path which after separating traversed some 500 yards nearly parallel with each other and perhaps fifty or a hundred yards apart, before coming together again. Three white men shod with moccasins had made an ambush on the old trail on the outside of the arc,

the whole place being covered with a thick undergrowth. D. had taken the new or shorter trail, and his route being discovered by the robbers, they had dashed straight at him across the interval separating the two trails, giving D. sufficient time to dismount and rush down the side of the ridge, where he had jumped headlong into a large clump of manzanitas and remained. The moccasins had followed him, passed beyond and all around his place of concealment, fortunately without finding him, and returned to the ridge, where they had, after searching the horse, blankets and saddle, tied the former to keep him from following them, and gone off, following at first the beaten trail to avoid being traced. Their own horses had doubtless been *cached* at some distant place, as only the one horse-track was visible. D. had afterwards come out of the manzanita, presumably after the robbers' departure, as his tracks were the latest, had returned to the trail, and again rushed down the mountain by long leaps and bounds, but this time without being followed, no track but his own showing beyond the manzanita. There was no longer any probability of success in following the robbers, as they might have kept the beaten trail for many miles before leaving it, and their tracks on it were already overrun by P. and his party.

Sending the bulk of my men off on the main trail ostensibly to follow the robbers, but in reality to get rid of them as they were much in the way; with a few picked men I made an effort to track up D. and should have almost certainly succeeded, but for running his trail into a freshly burned region of large extent which could carry no marks, the light dust and ashes borne about by the wind covering all signs in a few minutes. It was ascertained that this fire had started at some point within the burned area, and not at the scene of disturbance nor at any mining camp on the river, and was therefore probably started by D. himself at some of his camps or stopping places. D. could not be traced, and if still living was wandering somewhere on the mountain, although he had but to direct his steps always downward to come with certainty upon some water-course which whether wet or dry, must by following downward, inevitably lead him to the camps on the main Salmon.

Nearly or quite a week passed and the excitement was coming to be forgotten, when one morning a party of miners living in a

remote and secluded place up a side cañon, came down to Best's, bringing with them on a stretcher what was left of the unfortunate Dutchy, living, but no longer able to walk or stand, and almost speechless. He had wandered into their camp early that morning, starved, naked, delirious and nearly perished. With good care he soon revived sufficiently to tell his woeful tale. The incidents of the attack on him were just as has been inferred. After lying quietly in the manzanita thicket, where he heard them hunting all around for him, till the coast seemed clear, he had ventured forth and returned cautiously to the trail, where he found his horse tied, as P. had found it later. He was preparing to loose him and mount with the intention of returning to meet the party he knew was behind him, when he heard P.'s shout, and being confused about the direction, and supposing his assailants were coming back for him, again rushed down the mountain, this time to become irrevocably lost and return no more. This statement, with the further assertion that he had seen before and could identify one of the rascals, was first related to a hastily assembled miners' committee, who at once sent for me. Dutchy was too weak and miserable for further examination at the time, but the rest of us thought from the description we could recognize a certain hard character known as 'Oregon Jim.' That individual was by his own account a dangerous ruffian who had escaped from the Wilamette settlements after killing a man, and had been already suspected, not so much of robbing himself, as of carrying intelligence to the robbers, under pretence of hunting, respecting persons leaving the creek and which of them were best worth intercepting.

He camped alone at the extreme end of the settlement, some miles below on the opposite side of the river, below the debouch of Jackass gulch, a precipitous cañon up which he made a pretence of mining by himself, though no one else thought it worth working. The committee forthwith furnished me with written authority to select such assistance as I desired and capture Jim alive or dead, the former if possible, and bring him to Best's, where they would prepare for a general miners' meeting to be assembled at short notice. As this was considered a desperate job, I selected W., a good friend of mine from Missouri, who was a quick and sure shot

and with his partners possessed one of the best claims on the river and were responsible and respected residents. Placing a guard to prevent any intelligence following us down the river, W. and I set out at once, taking with us one of his partners named F., a brave, reliable and resolute man. Leaving F. on guard at the mouth of Jackass gulch to intercept the game if prematurely flushed, W. and I crossed the river and advanced cautiously down the narrow bar which though well covered with brush and large boulders did not exceed twenty feet in width from the river's edge to the base of the nearly vertical cliff. Jim's bivouac had been represented as not over two hundred yards below the crossing, and after warily stalking it about that distance I smelled fire, and looking out from behind a rock saw Jim, seated on the ground before a few embers, with his side presented, resting his back against a log on which his gun leaned within reach of his hand. Making a sign to W. who was following close, we both rose up quickly, covered our man, and ordered him to throw up his hands and come in.

Finding himself completely surprised and at our mercy he obeyed, and finding he had no arms on his person except a knife, which we secured, we called F. and simply told the prisoner there was a miners' meeting above which had directed us to arrest and take him before them. Now Jim although an American, passed for a mountain or fur Company man, which I believe was false. He was a stalwart ruffian of large stature, dressed in buckskin, gaunt, lithe and active as a panther. Give him a start of a couple of jumps into the brush at any of the numerous favorable places along our route of six miles, and he would be hard to get hold of a second time, so I proposed to tie his hands. But on his strenuous objection and promises to go along quietly, I was overruled by the others, so we set out, one in front and two behind, first warning him not to step out of the trail on any pretense and finally brought him safely to the meeting, where perhaps a couple of hundred men were soon assembled. A jury and prosecutor were at once appointed who publicly examined him respecting his peculiar habits of living alone, mining where little profit was to be got, going off on long and frequent hunts where little or no game abounded, and rarely bringing any back with him. Those

matters he explained more or less feebly, and admitted, probably because he was unaware how much or how little we actually knew, that he was hunting on the mountain on the day in question, but flatly denied any knowledge of or communication with robbers. He was then confronted with the Dutchman, who being terribly frightened and unnerved, hemmed, hawed and suspected, but failed to identify him. To do the miners justice, they gave us every chance to convict him, for everyone knew that if he got clear he was pretty certain to kill one of us, but with the total defect of actual proof, though all suspected him, a majority voted for his discharge and even voted down the proposition to banish him from the creek.

I have related this long and perhaps tedious story, as a sample of several that I was concerned in at different periods, mainly to illustrate the prompt and rude methods usually adopted in the remote and scattered mining camps of that day, to punish crime and protect the industrious in a primitive and perhaps till then unparalleled state of society. If convicted the prisoner would have been hung on the spot, but under the circumstances related he was acquitted, and so far as I know the guilty parties remained undiscovered. As we anticipated our relations with Jim were not yet over. Although he disclaimed robbery, he was a professed 'fighting man,' and almost an avowed assassin, and we had no intention of being shot from behind a bush, W. and I thought it expedient to pay a little attention to his movements. On the very next day word came that Jim was principally incensed at me, not so much for accusing or arresting him, as for wishing to tie his hands, and had made known his intention of killing me 'on sight.' Such a declaration in that country, though of course dangerous to make against a resolute enemy, was yet often risked in order to create evidence in advance, for few juries would convict a man willing to accept the probable results of it, for any homicide short of a deliberate cowardly murder from ambush. On the other hand, it was usually held to justify the threatened party in putting himself in the way of getting the 'first drop,' as almost anything except secret assassination is permissible to the man receiving such a notice.

The fact—as I have always believed—was that Jim knew I was collecting my debts and preparing to leave the river, which when once snowed in, is, or was, inaccessible for several months, and thought he might win a cheap credit for ‘running me off.’ Now in those foolish and reckless days I valued my ‘fighting reputation’ as well as the next, and would have sacrificed all my plans and property, and camped there a year, before going off under any such stigma, and if such was the ruffian’s real intention he made a big mistake in choosing his man. My good friends, W. and F., were staunch and true, and with the aid of their counsels the following plan of settlement was resolved on, based on some of Jim’s well known habits. When he was not out ‘hunting,’ as he called it, or pretending to work at his alleged claim, he was usually to be found gambling in Best’s tent. That trading post was a canvas structure about fifteen by thirty feet, with one long side toward the river, and the other on the main river trail. A liquor bar or counter occupied the rear side, the front side rolling up in the daytime. Thus the entire long front toward the public trail was at those hours open. In front of the liquor bar, the only movable furniture was a gambling table and benches all made of split puncheons. W.’s camp was not far above, and mine still higher, all the settlements in that vicinity being on the same, and only habitable side of the river. It was determined that W. should keep a lookout and inform me of Jim’s next presence at Best’s, where I would endeavor to surprise him, trusting W. to keep his friends off me, and generally to cover my rear.

The desired opportunity arrived next day. Approaching one end of the place quickly, I stepped suddenly round in front, and walking rapidly up to Jim, covered him at arm’s length. He was sitting at the table, back to the bar, and face to the front, with gun resting against the counter within reach, but his attention being given to the cards on the table, I was too quick for him and could have killed him by an imperceptible motion of the finger, which after his hostile declaration I had a right to do, and which it required some self-restraint not to make. Withdrawing at my order, under the alternative of instant death, the hand which had begun instinctively to reach for his gun, he said, “Well, you have

got the advantage; do you want to kill me?" "I don't want to kill you unless I have to, but I got your notice, and if you feel that way I will give you a chance to come outside with the same weapons and have a fair shot, at the word, but at the first trick I will kill you." "I said so when I was mad because you treated me so rough; you wanted to tie me." Of course when the matter came to that sort of discussion it was soon adjusted with the aid of those present, and we separated professing amity if not friendship.

The popular jurisdiction out of which this 'difficulty' grew, is none the less interesting when we reflect that it is almost peculiar to our own race and has at one time or another prevailed in every State of our Union, except those settled directly from European countries and thence supplied by charter with complete ready-made judicial machinery. In connection with the various unwritten popular civil codes affecting mineral lands and water supplies, the faculty of popular appreciation and enforcement of order is anterior to the advent of statesmen, or legislators, or even of public education. It is embedded deep in Anglo-Teutonic nature, and is traceable far back to those primitive days when our barbarous German ancestors met in the forests in general assembly of all the warriors, and by the clash of sword on shield signified their unconstrained and effective judgment on all propositions, including those of peace and war.

Can it be possible that in the march of luxury and civilization, we have lost, or are in danger of losing, that unique heritage among the corrupt and bungling failures of modern legislative methods, sustained upon the universal suffrage of ignorance and numbers? Must we believe that that early love of the masses for justice and political vigor has been, or is in danger of being, corrupted or impaired by the poverty and struggles which seem more and more incident to the civilized condition?

CHAPTER XIII

BACK TO CIVILIZATION AND THE SEA

As already explained, the miners on the Salmon were so hemmed in on all sides by lofty mountains that during the season of snow they were secluded for long periods from outside communication. I presume if that district be yet productive and inhabited, better roads have been made to obviate that difficulty, but in those early days one was put to his election at the first appearance of snow, either to get away at once or remain all winter. Having determined on the first, and collected all available debts, I started with one companion, who was the first person besides myself that ever traversed the new or direct trail. It did not require long to settle my affairs at the cattle camp in Scott's Valley, and take a leave which proved to be final of that interesting locality, but before it drops out of my narrative I must relate an incident or two connected with that vicinity and its abundant game.

Riding down the valley one evening with a single companion, we discovered a small bunch of wild plums covering something less than an acre, every tree bending under an untouched crop of ripe fruit. As it was getting dark, we hurried on to find a good camp on water, intending to ride back in the morning and fill a sack with the plums. On reaching the place before sunrise next morning, we found only a scene of devastation and ruin, some grizzlies having visited it in the interim and broken and torn down every tree, smashing and destroying such fruit as they could not eat, so that we scarcely got enough for a breakfast. The low divide which separates Scott's from Shasta Valley not only abounded in fruit and edible roots, but with nearly every kind of game existing in that country. Down in the deep, gloomy bottom of one of its darkest and most secluded cañons, I once came upon a curiosity seldom found anywhere, in the shape of a complete and untouched

skeleton of a grizzly, unfound even by the wolves and foxes. It was bleached clean and white, with just enough of the cartilaginous attachments remaining to hold all together. The position was one not unfrequently assumed by the animal in death, that is, prone on all fours, the head resting on the forepaws, something like a dog which waits impatiently for his master.

Encamped on the Scott near the lower end of the valley was a small party of half-breed mountain men, enjoying their leisure while waiting for the season for trapping. These men were beaver trappers, and though the skins of those animals are worthless during the summer, they kept a few traps set to supply the demand of the Yreka miners for beaver meat, which except the tail, the trappers never eat themselves when they can help it, as it is red and stringy, much like that of a cat, and by no means equal to a good fat Assinaboine dog. Nevertheless, after the trappers had reserved the tail for themselves, they had no difficulty in getting five times the price of good venison for the rest of the carcass, from the enterprising restaurant keepers in Yreka, who proudly advertised it on extempore signs, just as city restaurateurs advertise 'Green turtle here today.' Though there were good mines all around, nothing would have induced these easy-going half-breeds to work at anything during their holiday season, but hunting not being considered work, I could always find one or two of them to go hunting with me when I could afford to take a day off, especially as the Shasta-Scott divide was easily hunted on horseback.

There was no end of deer and bear in the foothills and low ranges and any two good hunters working together could kill far more meat than they could take care of and pack in with a reasonable number of animals. Although the salmon running season was over and the fish not then considered very good, a considerable number remained in pools near the heads of the stream, perhaps because they could no longer get out, and once I killed, with no more deadly weapon than a stick, a large heavy fish that was struggling in a little rivulet in Shasta Valley, not near deep enough to float him in an upright position. The miners of Salmon River during the running season caught all they wanted in all sorts of ways, many being killed with shovels.

That reminds me of a circumstance which, as I never knew much of the habits of lamprey eels, always seemed strange to me. I was interested with a lot of men who undertook to, and did, construct a dam and flume on the Salmon with a view of mining the river bed. The evening when the work was completed and the water turned in, an ox hide was placed at the entrance, to guide the flow into the structure and prevent the washing of the dam. Neither I nor anyone else had ever seen or heard of a lamprey in the river, which was a clear, dashing mountain stream rushing between and over rocks and boulders, and looking like anything rather than a *habitat* for eels. Yet at dawn next morning the hide was absolutely covered with them, clinging to it by their suckers as close to each other as they could take hold, their long bodies floating and twirling in the rapid current. Where they came from so suddenly, and how they managed to seize hold in such rapid current were equally inexplicable. I do not know the actual rapidity of the current running into the flume, but it was such that though six feet wide and less than one deep, a man could not stand in it without being instantly swept off his feet. The flume was of the same size throughout, of a single steep gradient and several hundred feet long. I cannot now remember in how many seconds an object was carried through, but it must have been at express railroad speed, at least.

The many incidents connected with that flume which disappointed so many splendid expectations, as the bed of the river contained no considerable quantity of gold, remind me of the queer conduct of a young rattlesnake, to which the transition from lamprey eels is not very violent, as both animals are worthless either for fun or food, and neither have many friends. The considerable quantity of lumber required for the flume and its supports, was sawed with a whip saw, kept running night and day by relays of men. The saw pit was located on a bench of the mountain side several hundred feet above the river, and the lumber slid down a straight and very steep way cut out and prepared for the purpose. One morning about ten o'clock (the lumber having been thundering down the slide since daylight continuously, or as fast as several men could start the boards) wishing to know how

much was left of it, I signalled to stop the slide, and proceeded to climb up it to reach the pit. More than half-way up the slide, a small tree less than a foot thick had been cut away leaving a hollow place on the lower or down-hill side of the stump, in which lay a young snake of two or three rattles, so torpid with the cold that, though he saw me, and feebly dragged himself into some effort at a coil, he was unable to strike, even when poked with a stick. Now in that condition he could not have come there that morning, which at no time had been warmer nor so warm as at that minute, and we must therefore suppose he had taken up his quarters the day before, and had lain contentedly or stupidly there while hundreds of boards were thundering continuously over and within a few inches of him!

It is hard to tear myself away from the recollections of that delightful country about the upper Klamath, Shasta, Salmon and Scott Rivers, and I do not wonder the poor *Modocs* made many a desperate fight before they were forced away from a not very distant locality, a quarter of a century later; but the time had come, and after closing out my affairs in Scott's Valley, as I had already done on the Salmon, I made my way to Redding's Springs, a little town near the head of the Sacramento and not far from the base of the magnificent Butte of Shasta. I may state here that at some later period I heard that after my departure from the Salmon, several men with a few pack mules had attempted to get out by the new cattle trail, but becoming lost in the intricacies of the mountain spurs, were overtaken by a snow storm and all perished but one, who finally extricated himself, coming down on the same side of the mountain without crossing it, probably by the identical error previously made by S. The direction of the main range and the confusion of its lateral ridges at that place were well calculated to cause such errors, and probably nine inexperienced men out of ten would have come down on the same side, convinced they had crossed and got clear of the main range.

At Redding's I took stage for Sacramento, about three hundred miles distant, and had a delightful journey. The line was just started, and harness trained horses being scarce, had been arranged with the view of having at least two collar broken horses in each

team, the other four being wild or half-broken *bronchos*, just as they were driven in from the plains. The road was level and the team was usually kept on a run to prevent them from getting into mischief and to keep up their enthusiasm. The changes were made about twelve miles apart, and it was a lively process to get a new team started, and still more exciting to cross the deep, dry *arroyos*, which in places intersected the road, and had to be taken on a wild run to prevent the green horses from stalling. Obtaining a seat beside the driver, I do not remember ever seeing livelier riding than during that three hundred mile trip, which, if I remember right, we made in about twenty-four hours. Sacramento City, which I had last seen a squalid collection of tents and cloth shanties, was now a large town with well-kept streets and numerous frame buildings, and had become the capital of the State, itself organized since I was last here. I remained there all day, trying with only partial success to identify old spots and find old friends, and then taking the fine steamer *Senator* in the evening, landed next day in San Francisco, and there also found a great city with long rows of wharves and buildings, and hardly a landmark except Telegraph Hill and the Plaza to remind one of its early days.

Though the city contained few or no other persons known to me, I was fortunate in finding one old friend, P., a passenger on the *Columbus* in 1850, now become a successful and prosperous business man, and what was of more importance to me, the depositary of a pile of accumulated letters, some of them two years old, which he had obtained and kept for me on the faith that I would some day turn up. From him I also learned, greatly to my surprise, of the presence in San Francisco of my brother Caspar, some years younger than myself, whom I had left a little boy at school. He had become subject to epileptic attacks, which failing to yield to any medical treatment at home, my father had been advised might be overcome by a long sea voyage with plenty of work and physical occupation. He had therefore been despatched with two other lads of similar condition in life, on the fine new ship *Cambridge*, sailing from Philadelphia to make the circuit of the world by way of California and China. These lads had been

assigned to a separate deck-house fitted up expressly for their use, and placed in the personal charge of the captain. Deeming themselves hardly used and overworked by him, they all ran away from the ship on her arrival at San Francisco, from which place the ship had, at the time of my arrival, already sailed for China. P. informed me that Caspar had declined giving any address, but called occasionally for news and letters. Of course, not knowing where to look, I found it impossible to trace him, and went every day to P.'s where I remained several hours daily for a long time without success.

At last as I was sitting one day in the counting-room at the rear of the store, conversing with P., a tall, stout, good-looking young fellow of about eighteen years, walked in, and after ignoring me, and saluting P., was formally introduced by the latter as my brother. Both of us required strong assurances from our mutual friend to convince us of the other's identity, so completely had we grown out of each other's recollection. I learned from C. that while at sea he had enjoyed comparative immunity from his attacks, which had nevertheless returned since he had been living on shore, with a decided tendency to increase in frequency and severity. He had at first obtained remunerative employment in the harbor as a rigger, but being afraid of getting a bad, perhaps fatal, fall, during some sudden access of his disease which came absolutely without warning, he was now employed at the semaphore station on Telegraph Hill as vessel reporter, where his employers valued him much but intimated that he underrated the terrible severity of his attacks. C. absolutely declined either to return home or to receive any assistance, priding himself with becoming spirit on having 'never borrowed a dollar in his life.' He was, however, quite aware that in the condition of his health he ought not to live any longer on shore and at length concluded to ship on a small brig belonging to an Italian friend of mine, who was going in her himself, to the Marquesas for fruit and live stock. I accompanied the brig till the pilot left her outside the bar, where I took my last leave of the poor afflicted boy who was making a solitary and gallant fight for life at an age when other lads of his condition are enjoying the first keen joys of opening life. Years

subsequently passed without any further intelligence of him, when in 1857, not long prior to my final departure from San Francisco, I received official notification from London of a letter addressed to me lying there in the general dead letter office, which on being reclaimed, proved to be a letter from him giving a brief statement of the brig's loss and his own arrival at Melbourne in 1853. As this letter, which I still possess, contains his last words, and indeed the last ever heard of him I give it here entire, notwithstanding the poor fellow meant it only for my eyes.

MELBOURNE, District of Port Philip,
Australia, June 23rd, 1853.

Dear Brother,

I have just sat down to let you know by what circumstances I have brought up in this part of the world, as I suppose I shall leave it shortly, either for Callao or some port in the East Indies. In the first place I must inform you that the little brig *Mary Helen* is among the things that were, having been condemned at the island of Upolu in the Navigator group. We had hardly got out of San F. before she commenced leaking like an old basket, notwithstanding which, we made a first-rate run down to the Marquesas Islands where we lay off and on among the various islands for about three weeks, trading with the natives for hogs, sandalwood, cocoanuts, &c. We then sailed for the Society Islands, intending to dispose of the cargo and return to San F. with a cargo of oranges and fruit. Arrived within 150 or 200 miles to leeward of them and doing our best to beat up against the trades, the leak, which had been growing worse, suddenly increased to such a degree that both pumps had to be kept going for two hours out of each watch, the water even then gaining, when one night during a smart gale of wind, the vessel laboring hard under close-reefed topsails, she commenced making water in a fresh place and about 10 P.M. the water had so increased that the forecabin was half full, and the water stood within four feet of her decks. It was useless to pump any more and as we expected every minute to see her roll on her beam ends we lowered away the boat, put in compass, instruments, provisions and water, and all hands, ten souls in all, got into her, intending to steer for the Societies. But before we could shove clear, the boat was swamped under the brig's counter, whereby all the provisions and water were lost. We got her righted and got in again without anything to eat or drink, and by constant bailing managed to keep her above water till morning by which time the wind had considerably moderated and the sea much settled, so we concluded to go back aboard the brig, as she was still floating and in sight. Once on board again we concluded to give her another trial and commenced heaving overboard the few hogs that had not been swept away, cut away topmasts, threw over the anchors, chains and indeed everything not absolutely necessary for working the ship. We then tried to work up to the Societies but finding she made water as

fast again when close hauled, had to put her before it for the Navigators, which we made in twenty days, during which time the pumps did not cease working for five minutes. All the sail we could make was the courses, and lower stay sails, the rest having been thrown overboard. After lying at Upolu for some time the barque *General Wool*, with passengers from San Francisco to this place, put in for provisions and we all obtained a passage here, where we at last arrived, having lost money, clothes, and in fact everything but what we stood in.

I am making enough here to pay expenses and shall leave as soon as I can find a ship to suit, which is no easy matter as I want an American vessel, of which there are very few now in port. As for the mines that are so much talked of, I would rather take my chance in California, from the reports brought down by thousands who have come down disgusted. Every man in the mining region, whether miner or not, is taxed thirty shillings a month, which, with the high price of provisions, is as much or more than most can make. Freight from here to the mines is 65 to 70 pounds a ton, which is not so very high considering the state of the roads, many teams requiring thirty days to go ninety miles, and the public house charge on the road is a guinea a feed, for each horse. Wages here are from two and a half to three dollars a day and board, about the same as at San Francisco. I suppose before receiving this you will have heard of the loss of the *Monl. City* [Monumental] with thirty-three lives, for which the Captain is now undergoing his trial at Sidney. As I have not much room left, I will now close, requesting when you write home you will let them know where I am, though if I can get a berth aboard a vessel for Callao and the States it is likely I may go home myself or to England.

Your affect. Bro.

CASPAR WISTAR, JR.

Though my father caused extensive inquiries to be made through consuls, merchants and others, in all principal South American, Australian and Indian ports, no further intelligence of Caspar has ever been received. My father of course never ceased to reproach himself for this fatal result of his plans, but I have always thought, with injustice to himself. C. was a worthy, affectionate and promising lad in every other respect than his one sad affliction, and as his life was hardly worth living thus menaced, and every possible curative remedy had been tried at home in vain, it was, in my opinion, a very just conclusion that the most radical and effective measure must be resorted to while youth still rendered it hopeful and practicable. Although this had not a successful result, treatment at home could in all probability, only have prolonged for a brief span a life thus doomed from its begin-

ning, and only at the expense of slow but certain mental and physical failure, than which no end can be more sad and painful. For myself, or anyone dear to me, of the two evils I would unhesitatingly prefer a fall from the yard-arm and quick death in the infinite depths below, to the lingering agony of a hopeless disease, slowly crushing in its relentless grasp all the waning faculties of mind and body.

As no great social niceties prevailed in San Francisco in those days, I soon made plenty of acquaintances, but not being familiar with any kind of city business, and soon tiring of an idle existence, I cast about for some such occupation as I might have become qualified for by my rather erratic and amphibious experience. The point on Contra Costa where Oakland now stands, opposite San Francisco, was then a most attractive place, shaded by groves of ancient liveoaks, watered by numerous tidal inlets from the bay, and backed in the distance by the rolling and grassy mountains of Contra Costa, with the heights of Monte Diablo still further in the background. Notwithstanding my former disastrous experience with Spanish titles and Mexican land grants, I purchased for a moderate sum a squatter's possessory claim in that lovely region, consisting of one hundred and sixty acres lying at the head of a deep tidal inlet, and watered by a small but never-failing rivulet of fresh water. It was unimproved, but the land was rich and sufficiently level, and afforded a fine site for a house on the end of a high point covered with venerable liveoaks, and beautifully situated on the inlet between the mouths of two small streams. Here I built a small frame house, with stable in rear, bought some three-horse teams, and set some hands to ploughing, while with a small hired sloop I transported seedwheat and barley, with lumber, fencing, and other necessary material, which at high tide could be landed on the premises. My intention was first of all to sow a hundred acres in wheat and the remainder in barley, and make the fencing and similar improvements later. This being the infancy of agriculture in those parts, little was known by the American settlers of the best method and time for putting in and cultivating grain, the small wants of the country having been theretofore supplied by importation from Chili, or 'round the

Horn." I therefore followed the plan of the neighbors whose settlements were beginning to fringe the lovely bay of San Francisco, which was to commence ploughing and sowing with the first November rains, and sow after the plough continuously till March. I do not know the methods of the great California grain farmers of the present day, but our system seemed to answer, and if it could have ensured prices equal to the crops, we should have all grown rich incontinently.

Of course at the time of the last March sowings, those of November were knee high, but as the dry season followed close, all seemed to mature nearly together, and were in fact harvested together, but long before the last, and even before sowing was finished, my agricultural enthusiasm had begun to evaporate. The dull monotony of ranch life became more and more insupportable, and more and more I realized the conclusion that the life of a hunter, or sailor, or tramp or anything was preferable to the tranquil and bucolic delights which had seemed so attractive from a distant view. There was, indeed, a little tame hunting within reach. Any number of geese frequented the bay shore, including my own place, and a few deer, or even a rare grizzly, might be found in the ravines of the coast range at no great riding distance. In the neighboring ponds, creeks and inlets there was abundance of teal and other ducks, and at early day-break immense flocks of geese could be seen grazing about the numerous points and headlands, and if gently treated, were quite indisposed to be driven from their long-accustomed haunts. But beyond the requisite amount of pot-hunting, I failed to acquire or could not maintain an interest in that sort of shotgun trifling, and in short the change of life, however, praiseworthy and respectable, had been too sudden to last, and a deep gloom of ennui and disgust settled down on me, from which I felt that I must run away or die. My neighbors were agricultural young men from Western States, unmarried, immersed in the varying fortune of their 'craps,' and knowing nothing of adventure beyond the one memorable episode of their lives—the journey from Illinois or Missouri across the plains. As for following the plough myself, like them, rather than trudge day after day up and down those monotonous

furrows, I would have preferred a midnight watch on the foreyard in a gale of wind, or a still hunt of the wildest Indian village or horse camp in the Rocky Mountains.

I suppose it would be impossible to convey to another mind the growing and well-nigh irresistible longing for the forest trails, the tumbling streams, the snow-fringed valleys, and all the perpetual and varied attractions and adventures of the mountain solitudes so far away. And then the buffalo and moose, the elk and caribou, the bighorn and the grizzly, the cunning marten and the prowling Indian, and all the other denizens that give a never-failing variety and excitement to the wilderness. I hated and despised myself when I reflected that I had voluntarily abandoned all these joys, to grub after wheat and barley and potatoes, and was to be rewarded by an endless succession of future mornings with tiresome views of the same dull fields, and no more exciting adventure than shoeing a horse or mending a strap! In this condition of mind it was not unnatural to frequent the San Francisco wharves, among whose busy scenes, and vessels arriving and departing from and to all parts of the Pacific, was always to be seen and heard something of the adventures of those lucky fellows who, being unshackled by farms or any other possessions, enjoyed all the freedom of movement from which I was for the first time debarred.

Among the numerous enterprises always being planned in San Francisco, one in particular seemed to possess special attractions. The barque *New World*, had been chartered by a sort of association or joint stock party, and was then preparing for a voyage to Puget Sound, at that time little known, but credited with a fine growth of fir timber then in especial demand for wharves and foundations, and with unlimited quantities of whale oil and salmon to be traded from the Indians for a trifle. It was proposed to admit to this party a sufficient number to man the ship, cut and load piles, trade with the natives, and in short, to sail and load the ship, each man putting up a small sum toward the capital required, most of which had been contributed by the original promoters. Sufficient progress had been made to make it certain the barque would sail on or about the day appointed, but there was still room for experts in the several capacities of seamen, axemen, hunters and

explorers, and I was earnestly pressed to join. Inducements and persuasions were brought to bear which would have been more than sufficient had I been rid of the uncongenial enterprise in which I was already embarked. But notwithstanding the whispering of prudence, as the sailing day approached I found myself less and less capable of resistance, and as I fortunately had for boss-farmer an honest and capable man who undertook to care for my interests while absent, the result may be easily guessed—I consented.

The barque was a fine vessel well commanded, manned, and found, and made a quick and uneventful voyage to Cape Flattery, where she entered the straits of San Juan de Fuca with the intention of feeling her way up toward Olympia, a small settlement at the head of the sound, and the only one on its waters, with the exception of the H. B. Company's posts at Victoria and Steilacoom, and a settler or two about starting cattle farms on Whidby's Island. Off the latter a whaleboat was supplied and manned from the ship for a side visit to Victoria, and subsequent exploration of the east shore, and Hood's Canal, in which party I was fortunate enough to get included. We accomplished everything that was expected of us and something more, frequently seeing and communicating with the ship, whose progress, guided in those unknown waters only by the lead, was necessarily slow. Timber abounded everywhere on the mainland down to the water's edge, but much of it was too large for the purpose required. A permanent anchorage was at length selected in the mouth of Duwamish River and Bay, opposite a large village belonging to the friendly chief, Seattle, on the site of which the present city of that name now stands. In this vicinity the axemen went to work, while two hundred empty barrels were towed by the whaleboat to the mouth of the Puyallup, where they were left with a small party to trade for and salt down salmon. In the same useful tender I then made an exploration of the upper Sound, visiting Fort Steilacoom and the H. B. cattle farm and the settlement of its superannuated employees adjacent, also the lovely cascade of Skookum Chuck, and the village of Olympia, and thus returning to the ship. The Sound with its several bays, natural canals, passages and islands, is one of the

loveliest sheets of salt water in the world, smooth as a river and sheltered from all violent winds, surrounded by bold and lofty fir-clad banks, and swelled by many fine tributaries, then all abounding in game and fish. The Indians being much harried by the Hydahs and other fierce tribes from the vicinity of Queen Charlotte's Island, were very friendly to the whites, and a large quantity of oil was obtained from them in bladders at the rate of one ten-penny nail for a bladder of oil, but the stench caused by the shifting of this half rotten stuff into casks was enough to depopulate a city.

While the ship lay at Seattle I obtained from that kindly old chief a large canoe and a team of six young bucks as paddlers, with whom I ascended Duwamish River to the large and beautiful lake from which it flows, making one small portage at some rapids. The lake which according to the testimony of my crew, had never before been seen by a white man, is an extensive, picturesque and lovely body of water. Much of its shores are open and park-like, interspersed with fine groves of deciduous trees, abounding with deer almost as tame as cattle. Beyond, rises everywhere the forest of firs, tall, dark and stately, with the superb snow-peak of Mount Rainier always in view, crowning and completing one of the finest landscapes in the world, of which it is from all points the chief feature. As a combination of the distant scenery of snow-clad mountains with the pastoral fertility of the fine bottom lands, and the finished park-like beauty of the shores, points and islands of the lake, I recall no place possessing more varied attractions for one who could content himself with the society of Nature, buried in a remote but rich and lovely wilderness, far removed from the uneasy struggles and law-made vices of civilized men.

The deciduous trees which, though everywhere interspersed with small prairies, thickly cover much of the Duwamish bottoms, in competing for their share of air and light grow out horizontally for astonishing distances above the clear water of the river, and during the mornings and evenings were filled with countless multitudes of grouse in search of the buds which are their favorite food. These unamiable birds were so occupied with crowding and quarrelling for place and food, and paid so little attention to our craft

as it slowly stemmed the current along shore, that we had no difficulty in knocking over with paddles all we wanted, with scarcely any delay to our progress. At some distance before coming to the lake, the Indians had placed an obstruction or weir across the river where they were taking large quantities of salmon with scoop nets, as the fish leaped out of water in their efforts to surmount the obstacle. There must have been a couple of hundred natives camped at this place, and the pile of freshly-caught fish constantly reduced by the women cleaners, and increased by fresh captures, was large enough to fill a good-sized apartment, and in such abundance the single fish we required had no appreciable value. This absorption of a whole tribe in catching, splitting, cleaning, drying and smoking, was very entertaining, illustrating in a practical way the inexhaustible multitudes of fish in these streams, where instead of filling our two hundred barrels, we might in a short time have loaded the ship.

The natives below the anchorage at Seattle's, though not hostile were of much tougher character, and being more addicted to sea-fishing and more enterprising travelers, possessed large store of fish oil which they were keen to trade for nails and any other article of iron. A small vessel properly fitted with tanks or casks could have been loaded in a short time with no greater outlay than a few kegs of nails. Could I have extricated my modest capital from the agricultural enterprise in which it was so well and permanently locked up, I should certainly have returned from San Francisco for that purpose. In fact that unlucky farm, however worthless for all profitable purposes, was such a constant and effectual obstacle to every other design, that before I got finally clear of it I became so thoroughly imbued with certain primary principles of finance that to this day whenever considering any prospective undertaking requiring expenditure of capital, almost the first test that occurs is, what is the chance to get out if necessary to realize? Thus whatever may have become of the accursed acres, I am quite consoled by the indirect and incorporeal but substantial dividend that I continue to draw from them, more secure than stocks, houses or lands, being beyond the reach of the most predaceous legislators and all other plagues and vicissitudes of fortune.

I could linger long in recalling the pleasant days passed on Puget Sound and the endless labyrinths of its many branching waters. Whether in exploring with my Indian crew their hitherto unseen recesses, navigating the broad waters of the lower Sound, hunting about the heads of rivers, or observing the curious customs of those amphibious natives, I enjoyed it all and time never hung heavy for a moment. But the completion of the barque's loading was at last announced, and the day fixed for her sailing, the morning of which found myself and two others encamped on what we called after one of our number, Terry's Point, opposite and about two miles from the ship. The weather, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, had up to this time been almost invariably pleasant for out-door occupation even in the cramped and confined position afforded by a seat in a canoe, where I had passed so much of my time, but during the night before the sailing-day fixed upon, several inches of snow fell, and ice half an inch or more thick had formed entirely across Duwamish Bay. The ice was too thin to travel on, and too thick to get a canoe through, without great labor, delay and risk. Nevertheless, the ship having showed her sailing signal at daybreak, we must reach her somehow, and a high old voyage it was, breaking ice all the way. Any small craft but a dugout canoe must have been cut through and sunk, in which case neither rescue nor swimming would have been possible. But ours, though badly cut, stood the racket nobly, and after several hours of hard work we reached the ship, which weighed and made sail immediately, breaking her way out without difficulty, the ice having already become soft, and the snow almost disappeared from the land.

Our principal difficulty in navigating the Sound, arose from its great depth, bold shores, and consequent scarcity of good anchorage. Even a ship's length from the shore the depth of water was usually too great for the full scope of cable, and being therefore obliged to keep under sail nearly every night in narrow waters with slight and variable breezes, the skipper got little rest till the ship at last got clear of Cape Flattery, and standing out to sea for a good offing, bowed again to the long swell of the Pacific, and pointed her jib boom for the Golden Gate.

Everything looked favorable for making a good voyage, and we confidently expected to be bowling through the Farallones within a week, when the ship ran into a southwester only a day or two out from port, which soon put another face on our affairs. Not having enough offing for the shore tack, the barque was hove to with port tacks aboard as though looking for Kamschatka, and sail was shortened as the storm increased, till her usual dress for days at a time was reduced to storm stay-sail and close-reefed main topsail. Among some old papers and letters of that period, I have found a few detached pages of a small pencilled log kept at the time, which I recognize as referring to that voyage, and which may serve to give some account of a great storm which turned out to have been one of the most memorable on the coast.

Dec. 30th, 1852. Passed Cape Flattery and got clear of the land early this A.M. and stood S. S. E. down coast with fair wind of six knots.

Dec. 31st, Same as yesterday.

Jan. 1st, 1853. Same till 8 P.M. when wind hauled to S. and E. and blew heavy all night.

Jan. 2nd. At 8 P.M. wind having freshened to a gale, ship hove to on starboard tack under close-reefed main topsail with fore and main stay-sails. Slashing gale all day, ship rolling rails under, and making water fast, one pump broken or damaged, the other, though constantly going by relays, unable to keep it down.

Jan. 3rd. Gale continues, ship remains hove to, water increasing in hold, impossible to get the timber out, or to go down among it.

Jan. 4th. Gale increased till dark, at which time it blew a hurricane, water slowly gaining, and ship laboring very heavy.

Jan. 5th. The same.

Jan. 6th. Moderated at noon enough to make sail for a few hours, when the gale increasing, she was put back to double reefed main topsail with fore staysail, and spanker.

Jan. 7th. Gale returned worse than ever. At daylight hove to on port tack, under storm sails, and found ship makes less water on this tack. At 9 A.M. blowing a hurricane, carried away staysail and split main topsail. With much difficulty got a small piece of new canvas made fast around lee main shrouds, to lie to by. Were gaining fast on water, when at 12 M. a sea came on board which wrecked galley, carried away spanker boom, cabin skylight and both quarter boats, and broke both legs of the man at the wheel. Water hip-deep in both cabin and forecabin. All hands passing water in buckets. Trysail gaff came down, smashing rail and badly injuring two good men, who were saved with difficulty. Just before dark carried away main topmast backstay at masthead. Impossible to go aloft to clear wreck and repair chafing-gear in the darkness, and all the upper standing rigging is in dangerous condition.

Jan. 8th. A terrible night; both watches on all night and no sleep for any. At daylight orders given and men mustered to try and cut away deck load, but on closer examination, too risky, and orders countermanded. The sea now running literally mountains high, the horizon circumscribed to a few ship's lengths, the air filled with flying foam, the sea frequently breaching the vessel from whose decks everything breakable or movable is gone. No galley, no cooking, nothing to eat but a small allowance of wet hardtack from the cabin lockers and salt salmon from the 'tween deck's cargo.' All the wounded men lashed in cabin bunks and well attended, but one is evidently dying. Captain says he has a bully crew, and crew say they don't want a better skipper.

Here the few pages detached from my little log and accidentally preserved for so many years, come to an abrupt end, and I must recur to memory. The gale lasted, with slight intermissions, for three weeks, beating all gales in my experience for duration. Though the spars and rigging were badly damaged, the hull remained staunch and on the port tack made comparatively little water. The cargo of piles having been loaded through the bow ports, now replaced and caulked tight, could not be got at, and even the deck load could not be cut away in the tremendous sea running, without danger of carrying away the standing rigging and bringing down spars. But the worst privation was the entire failure of provisions and scarcity of water. The former gradually disappeared till nothing was left but the salt salmon of the cargo, and not even bread, sugar, coffee, mustard or pepper. The rain which almost constantly fell and kept everyone wet and miserable, afforded no drinkable water because the boarding seas and drenching spray kept everything on board as salt as the sea itself. Consequently we had to content ourselves during several weeks with the eternal salmon towed overboard to freshen, and a scant and diminishing allowance of fresh water to wash them down.

However all things come to an end at last, and when at length the wind blew itself out and hauled by the west, the skipper was not slow to make sail and get the ship on her course. But now came a new difficulty which not seldom tries the patience of the sailor, after such long continuance of the wind in one quarter. After a few days, that unstable element proceeded to dwindle to nothing, and off Point Reyes failed altogether, leaving the storm-tossed barque drifting about among the Farallones almost in sight

of port, but without control or steerage way, in a dead calm. Though by this time so sick of the taste, sight and smell of salt salmon that most of us preferred to endure a considerable amount of the pangs of hunger, we enjoyed what compensation could be found in the rare opportunity of a close and prolonged inspection of the Farallones. Indeed the ship showed an inclination to become so unpleasantly intimate with those lonely sentinels of the Golden Gate, that on more than one occasion we were obliged to man boats and tow lines to counteract the tendency of the lazily heaving but powerful swell to set her against their dangerous points.

These diminutive islands are but the sharp angular peaks of a number of wave-beaten rocks, varying from a mere needle to many acres in extent, rising from deep water twenty miles outside the bar to a considerable height above the sea. From the prudent distance usually preferred by vessels, they resemble a lot of huge white sea-birds as they are alternately revealed and hidden by the heaving billows of the ocean; but at close quarters they disclose numerous odd shapes, and are swarming with marine life. Large herds of seals and sea-lions are nearly always to be seen and heard, and these islands constitute a favorite resort and breeding-place for myriads of sea-fowl, whose eggs supplied San Francisco in its early days, before the placid and home-loving hens were made aware of the brilliant prospects awaiting their emigration to the land of gold.

But by far the most interesting and unique curiosity of these lonely rocks was the vast shoals of sharks and dog-fish which swarm among them, presumably on the lookout for the prey which their neighborhood affords. For hours at a time one could look down through hundreds of feet of clear transparent water absolutely crowded by a jostling and innumerable multitude of those fierce tigers of the sea. Any white object dropped from the taffrail would be pushed about and tossed aside by countless inquiring noses from its first touch upon the water till it had slowly sunk to such profound depths that only a faint and vanishing gleam reached the eye as it continued to run the gauntlet of ever-thickening multitudes, sinking slowly but ever downward toward the deep abysses of the ocean floor.

CHAPTER XIV

ANOTHER VOYAGE UP THE COAST

On arrival at San Francisco the universal subject of conversation was the great storm we had on the whole so safely weathered. Along the coast it had been severely felt throughout the length of the State, which borders the Pacific for nearly a thousand miles; and for weeks afterwards arriving vessels continued to contribute their numerous stories of loss and disaster at sea.

Owing to various causes our voyage had yielded but moderate financial success. The salmon had not been put down in the expert manner required to command good prices. The fish oil had to be shipped round Cape Horn to a market in the States, and the piles having been cut much longer than was at that time required, had to be shortened to a length that, had we properly understood the matter, would have permitted us to stow a much greater number. Then the repairs of the ship, and the charter money for the lengthened voyage, and other items swelled the expenses, so that the net result was small, and even that would not be forthcoming till after a long and tedious adjustment which the capitalists on shore were doubtless not very keen to expedite.

My farmer was getting along well with his work, the ploughing and sowing being still in progress, and as I saw no particular occasion for my presence there much before harvest, I cast about again for some more congenial employment to fill up the interval. As usual, one might have his pick of many, for whatever other fault might be found with the infant city, it was never dull, nor at any time lacking in inventive spirits with their innumerable plans, schemes and devices. The subject now most in favor was an expedition to discover some harbor which it was thought must exist above Cape Mendocino, somewhere on that long reach of coastline stretching some 800 miles from Point Reyes to the Columbia,

where no harbor more worthy of the name than the open roads of Trinidad, had yet been found. Such a one, if it could be discovered, must afford sites for towns and settlements with shorter routes to the interior, and by way of reimbursing immediate expenses, would probably furnish a return cargo of piles, which it was evident would be required in large quantity by a city daily pushing its streets farther and farther out into the bay. The half-rigged brig, *Kate Heath*, had already been chartered to carry out such expedition and bring back piles and spars to be cut and loaded, while inland explorations should be pushed forward by detached parties. The voyage would probably be much shorter than the last, and as the time required seemed to fit in well with my occasions, I became one of the party.

The brig having completed her preparations, sailed with a considerable force in excess of a regular crew, composed like the former expedition, of carefully selected men embracing experts in all the several kinds of skill required. The whole was under command of an experienced and capable old whaling-skipper who took charge of the vessel and her expected lading and would lend his sagacious counsel to the other purposes of the expedition. A quick voyage was made and a good landfall on the Oregon coast, where a large and far reaching break in the mountain range was soon made out, indicating the probable debouch of some considerable river. Though no such place was laid down in the chart, this from its position and extent must be the Umpqua, unknown at its mouth but familiar to me near its source beyond the Oregon and California trail. After much maneuvering with the vessel, the skipper, who like most whalers was an expert surfman, discerned an interval in the long wall of heavy surf breaking on the bar, which seemed to afford a tortuous but sufficient passage. No other semblance of a harbor had been made out, and as the changing views commanded from numerous different positions of the ship, more and more encouraged the idea of an inside bay of large dimensions with probably a large and far-extending tributary, it was at length resolved to try the entrance.

Since most of the Oregon rivers are inaccessible from the sea, and even the great river Columbia is only reached by one of the

most hazardous entrances in the world, where even men-of-war have been dashed to pieces among the shifting shoals and breakers of its bar, the effort to take a sailing vessel into this unknown opening, with no knowledge of its extent or character was an extremely nervous and risky undertaking. It was uncertain whether there was any accessible harbor at all, and if so, what sort of passage existed through the formidable bar that could be seen intercepting the long, smooth rollers coming in from the Pacific, and dashing them into a far-reaching wall of surf that seemed to guard with an impassable barrier the doubtful passage hitherto sealed against all mankind.

In order to obtain the best conditions for the attempt, our wary old skipper waited several days for a leading breeze from the right direction, so as to handle the vessel promptly in any of the numerous contingencies that might occur. Getting at length a wind that suited him, he proceeded to make the following preparations as early as the eventful morning afforded sufficient light. A whaleboat with ensign, compass, spy-glass, hand and deep sea sounding lines, and some water and provisions, was manned by the mate and eight good oarsmen, and sent in ahead to make and signal observations of the channel. The brig was then put under fore topsail and all plain fore and aft sail, two good men at the wheel, hatches battened, crew at quarters, captain on the fore topgallant yard, with men stationed intermediately to pass word to the wheel. The last inshore stretch was arranged to bring the brig to the proper starting point and on reaching in, the helm instead of being put down for another tack, was kept steady, and the die was cast.

As the brig with full sails and a good breeze on her quarter, holding her steady course over the smooth but gigantic rollers, began to near the tumultuous line of white water, the small passage seen from outside opened more clearly, but from my position at the slings of the foreyard, still more distant lines could be seen breaking beyond, showing that if a through passage existed at all, it must be crooked enough to tax all the readiness of the skipper who, perched alone on the topgallant yard, nervously chewed unlit cigars and uttered not one unnecessary word. As the brig

came up to, and entered the opening, a mighty wall of roaring surf breaking on either hand as high as her foreyard, it was one of those few exciting moments of life which can never afterwards be forgotten. In the continuous crash and thunder of the breakers scarcely any other sound was audible, and face to face with that mighty tumult, the ship and all the rest of the world seemed inconceivably mean, insignificant, and small.

It was at this crisis that an accident occurred that cost the lives of the unfortunate boat's crew in plain sight and almost within reach. The whaleboat whether fearing to venture among the formidable breakers opening to sight beyond the first line or in the effort to get out of the brig's way, had approached or been carried too near the first line of breakers on the port hand, and yielding to a powerful effort of the mate to prevent broaching, the steering becket suddenly parted, and the boat immediately broaching to, her stern was caught by a high curling crest and the entire outfit hurled end over end into the furious tumult which at once engulfed them. Assistance was impossible, every qualified man being at quarters, and even a misglance of the skipper's eye at that crucial juncture might have caused the speedy loss of the ship and all on board.

The wind was already rising and inclined to be squally with spits of snow, but the captain with quick decision and rare presence of mind conducted the brig safely through the crooked and dangerous passage and let go her anchor in a calm and lovely bay three or four miles inside the bar, and nearly surrounded by fir-covered mountains. Here the ship was quickly visited by numerous friendly natives in canoes, who, though burning with curiosity to examine the strange apparition, when made to understand the loss of the boat's crew, immediately manned their large high-prowed surf canoes and rushed away to the rescue. Some hours later a long procession approached the ship with the single survivor of the catastrophe, who had been found in smooth water inside the bar, unconscious, but alive and clinging with clasped hands to the steering oar. None of the others had yet come in through the breakers and must be therefore by this time beyond hope of rescue. To complete the story of that fatal tragedy I will here add that

the man thus recovered was restored and saved, the others being all lost. But during the next few weeks and before we left the place, the Indians had searched out and recovered all the bodies, some of them drifted many miles up the coast, and one so deeply covered under an immense collection of drift-logs that it required the labor of several men for considerable part of a day to chop it out. They also from time to time found and brought in with much ceremony all the numerous pieces of the boat, which had been smashed to atoms, the compass, spy-glass, ensign, oars, hand line and, in short, her entire furniture except the deep sea line which having many pounds of lead attached, was never recovered.

On the following day, the harbor having been superficially explored, the ship was worked round a sandy point to a secure anchorage close in shore, her bow ports knocked out, a small zinc house put together on land. The axemen went to work cutting, rafting and loading piles, while a few of us in the ship's boat with a wondering but jolly lot of Indian guides proceeded up the bay and river. At the head of the bay some miles above the ship's anchorage, we entered the true mouth of the river which was ascended for thirty miles, the entire distance closely bounded on both sides by steep fir-clad mountains, affording in but few places smooth ground enough to land and build fires. The farthest point reached with the boat being considered accessible both for vessels from the sea and wagon roads from above, was pitched on for a settlement, and called Scottsburg, the town being forthwith inaugurated by building a substantial log cabin and corral. At this place the mountains first commence to retire gradually from the river, and the bottom to widen out into narrow but constantly increasing prairies. A few miles above Scottsburg was found a small post of the ubiquitous H. B. C., in charge of a Canadian clerk named Garnier, who had of course come in from above, and had lived for twenty-three years in this solitary spot without seeing a white woman, or as he even more feelingly complained, a priest. He however possessed a Chelowitz wife and some grown up children, and was by no means entirely neglected in more important respects, his spiritual interests being in charge of a priest at Fort

Vancouver, on the Columbia, and punctually attended to by letter once a year! Within the stockade stood two large ungrafted apple trees raised from seed, and in mature bearing condition. An apple of the last crop generously given us was hard, green and sour, but of course the Indians, far and near, never having seen anything of the kind, regard the fruit as a wonderful phenomenon, and make long journeys to see it.

The arrival at Fort Umpqua settled all question respecting the identity of the river, and the Indians being reputed friendly as far up as the Oregon and California trail, the valley was examined to a considerable distance above the fort, constantly widening out into a broad, rich and level prairie with lovely scenery and admirably adapted for settlement, which it has now no doubt long since received. As a good force was engaged in loading the vessel from very convenient timber, not much time could be afforded here, and returning to Scottsburg we again took boat to regain the vessel. Most of this voyage was made by night, flushing nearly all the way continuous miles of ducks, which though invisible in the darkness, rose with successive roars from myriads of wings that must have astonished the echoes of the lonely river. The surface of the water at night being shrouded not less by darkness than by the shadow of the lofty surrounding mountains, we nearly ran over a small black bear who was crossing the river on some business of his own. Resenting the unwonted intrusion, he took the imprudent step of trying to come on board, and after nearly upsetting the boat and frightening some of the sailors almost to death, was at length held off with a boat hook till ignominiously dispatched with a pistol.

This incident brings to mind another interview with a young black bear which may be worth relating even at the cost of a short digression. At some far northern point of the Rocky Mountains on the distant waters of the Liard or the Peace, I was following an old deer or Indian trail along the side of a picturesque cañon, affording through its upper opening a superb distant view of the great snow range beyond. At the culminating point of this view, where a wide circling sweep of the cañon had brought me directly opposite the opening, I sat down on the upper side with my feet in

the trail to rest and enjoy at lesiure the scenery of the grand amphitheatre thus magnificently displayed. Hearing a slight noise I cautiously looked round and saw a young cub of perhaps five and twenty pounds weight trotting leisurely toward me down the path. I did not care to risk the noise of a shot and had no use for the cub, so I remained quiet and watched to see what he would do when he should run up against my legs. When he was almost in actual contact with those obstacles, his olfactories, I suppose, gave the alarm of something unusual, and following up the obnoxious legs with his eyes he fastened them on my face, cocking his head on one side in the ludicrous intensity of his inquiring gaze. During this anxious inspection, if my continuations had been under me in proper position for a spring, I might easily have jumped and caught him by the ears, but before I could gradually withdraw and get them in position, he seemed suddenly to arrive at unfavorable conclusions, and with a baby growl of astonishment, sprang aside up the mountain and made off for his mama much faster than I could follow him.

Returning to my narrative: When we reached the ship we found her loading nearly completed and in fact she sailed soon after for San Francisco, but in going out, unfortunately grounded on a long spit running out into the supposed channel from the south shore some distance inside the bar. The tide going down, the brig thumped heavily, and a fresh northwester setting in during the night sent in enough sea to bump and roll her about, sweeping the decks, carrying away rails and forward deck-house, filling the forecastle, knocking both topmasts out of her, and in short wrecking pretty much everything above decks. It was impossible to get out the bow ports to lighten the vessel, or to do any other work, the men generally lashing themselves fast on the high quarter deck to avoid being washed off. We could, therefore, do nothing for the time but wait and hope the hull might continue to hold staunch. After two or three days, the wind and sea going down, she was kedged off at high tide, still sound in hull, but with not much else left of her, and in no condition to go to sea. There was nothing now to be done but unreeve and save the upper standing, and all running rigging, cut green poles on shore, where

they were fortunately very convenient, and get such jury rigging on her as might serve for the voyage to San Francisco, which there was no other means of reaching.

Headed by the skipper, all hands went promptly to work, except the second and only surviving mate, a tall and powerfully built Norwegian, whose shoulder had been dislocated while the vessel was thumping on the spit. Nothing could be done for him at the time, as the sea was breaking heavily on board and all hands were either lashed fast or hanging on in the lower rigging. But after the wreck had been safely got off, as there was no doctor accessible, the skipper himself undertook the job. The man was not only large and muscular, but as well as I remember, nearly sixty hours had elapsed since the injury, which was complicated by severe bruises, the man having been dashed violently down from the poop to the main deck, striking his shoulder against the chime of a cask which had got adrift and he was trying to secure. Our skipper was no youngster, and was not to be surprised or nonplussed by any contingency the sea affords. After revolving in his mind for a time the whole science of surgery—as understood by shipmasters—the method he finally hit upon was as follows, upon which as far as I know, there is no patent.

A large cotton pocket handkerchief was made fast to the patient's wrist by a couple of half hitches, the other end being secured to a lanyard of strong stuff manned by several stout fellows. The man, who could scarcely bear his arm touched, was extended on his back on deck, and the captain, removing one boot, took purchase with his foot against the patient's armpit, and getting a rolling hold of the arm with both hands, gave the word to 'sway away.' The patient howled, cursed, kicked and swore in vain; the skipper having started in to win, stuck to him till he clicked the joint in. When remonstrated with afterwards by the sufferer for the excessive pain of the operation, the skipper indignantly remarked: "D—n you, if I had another mate you might carry your arm around unjinted as long as you liked, but I can tell you I ain't agoin to try and take this wreck to Frisky with no one-armed mate."

After this successful surgical operation, it soon became apparent that in consequence of the delay caused by the wreck and time required for repairs, a serious shortage of provisions was likely to occur. As the steep mountain sides and dense forests of the vicinity afforded little large game, it was at last determined that I should take one man, reascend the river, and if necessary, cross the Calapooya range to the Willamette Valley to purchase and bring down cattle. As this involved a long journey on foot over a country much of which was unknown, and probably without available trails, I picked out a stout, long-legged fellow named Fisk, amiable and willing, who said he could walk for a week without getting tired. We took the ship's longboat as far as Scottsburg where it was safely secured and left, and then set off on foot up the valley at the rate of forty miles a day, resolved to make it fifty or more as soon as we could get our walking tacks aboard. Going up without encumbrance offered no difficulties. No Indians troubled us, and my mind and muscles were chiefly interested in giving F. some first lessons in getting over ground. Though a seafaring man unused to so much walking, he held out well and kept me pretty busy till we came down to the upper Willamette settlements, then not extending far above Salem. Here we purchased four of the usual half-wild two year olds, with the important proviso that the farmer's boy on horseback, should help drive them to the head of the valley and well into the Calapooya pass, by which time it was hoped they might be somewhat tired and exhibit less of the usual reluctance to leave their accustomed pastures. But I am constrained to acknowledge that I did those Oregon steers less than justice, as when we got them fairly into the the mountain passes, their ingenious and devilish contrariness had only fairly commenced.

It was risking as much as they were worth to take one's eye off them a minute, day or night. The only way to retain their society was to run them at the top of our speed all day, and then hunt out some *cul de sac* where one of us could pen them in and guard them while the other snatched some sleep. To crown the troubles of our lot, the rains commenced with vigor worthy of a better cause, and from the crossing of the Calapooyas to Scottsburg, a distance

of at least 100 miles, never let up an hour at a time. The prairie and open country being mostly covered by the all-pervading Oregon 'brake' or bracken fern, growing higher than one's head and holding water like a sponge, every touch brought down such copious showers that we never enjoyed a dry moment. On the last day of this moist and musty trip, rather than risk the cattle another night on the prairie, we made a spurt and ran them all the way into the corral at Scottsburg, arriving near midnight after a continuous tramp of—I am afraid to say how many miles. Next day we promptly killed and cut them up, their quarters loading down the boat to an ominous point that would require good weather for crossing the bay. We ran down the river the same day with a fair wind, but on nearing the head of the bay after dark, found a brisk gale and rising sea coming in from the offing, against which we could make no headway with canvas, and therefore stowed the mast and lug, and took to the oars. The wind soon rose to a humming gale driving before it a sea which every moment became more formidable, and it was not long before we were obliged to lighten the boat by throwing over some of the dearly bought beef to avoid being swamped.

The peculiar geography of the place at which we were now arrived, had much to do with events that followed. The Umpqua debouches into its bay at such angle that a wind tolerably free down the river becomes dead ahead in the bay, and when blowing fresh, drives in a heavy sea that breaks against the tall cliffs on the starboard hand with appalling violence. Being without light or compass and the land concealed by dense darkness, we made an effort to hold our course at least till day-break, by keeping the increasing seas on our port bow, but under a black sky, with everything obscured by driving snow and rain, nothing could be seen but the roaring white crests fiercely sweeping down upon us, and the necessary pulling was materially interrupted by the necessity for incessant bailing. The wind and sea must have carried us farther to starboard than we supposed, for the night was scarcely half through, when we became conscious of an increasing roar gradually subduing all other sounds, and were soon able dimly to make out the white line of crashing breakers upon which we

were rapidly driving. The sight of fixed objects soon showed the rapid rate of our progress to destruction, and seeing the impossibility of avoiding it, and remembering the forbidding character of the rocky cliffs, we gave ourselves up for lost, and let the boat drive stern foremost, keeping her head to the sea to escape immediate foundering.

Finally when nearly up with the breakers, with apparently the last dread moment at hand, and nothing remaining to be done but to consider how and when we should jump clear of the boat and take a desperate chance among the rocks, a large object loomed up ahead which proved to be one of the immense firs growing on this coast, stranded just outside the breakers and projecting a long arm into the air. Fortunately the boat possessed a long, stout painter with which, notwithstanding the rushing seas, we succeeded in getting a turn round a stout branch. Throwing over the rest of the ill-starred beef, we succeeded by great and continuous efforts in riding safely to this lucky mooring, but as the set of the sea on shore was partly across the wind's direction, we were both obliged to row on the lee side all night—when not interrupted by bailing—in order to keep head to sea. Daylight disclosed a mountainous sea rolling in from the offing with few signs of abatement, and for the first time gave us full appreciation of our marvelous luck in keeping afloat through the night. The wind snatched long ridges bodily from the crests of the foaming seas and hurled them onward, filling the air with water and making it impossible to see any distance to windward. On shore the white horses racing in piled high against the cliffs, and seemed to offer nothing but quick destruction in that direction.

But as the light of morning grew clearer, a short and narrow strip, having the appearance of a small sand beach at the base of the cliffs, could be discerned a few hundred yards farther on, and since we must let go at some time, we resolved to make a desperate effort to beach the boat at that more hospitable point. Getting her well bailed out, and ourselves seated at the oars, we watched for a smooth roller, and anxiously cast off. Immediately the seas leaped on their escaping prey, and hove the boat shoreward, but pulling for life with every muscle strained, we succeeded in

getting abreast of the little beach before the outside breaker caught and rolled us over into the wild surge of waters. Though counted a good swimmer, I was instantly tossed and rolled and buried and half-choked with sand and water, deprived of all power to help myself, or even knowledge of my position, or which end was up, till after what seemed an endless period, I struck heavily and unexpectedly on hands and knees. Recovering a glimpse of the shore and the outside world, I was able to struggle with more intelligent purpose till I got upon a heavy breaker which cast me far up on the sand and within arm's length of a big rock, breathless, choked, bruised and well skinned on all salient points, but whole in all essential respects of wind and limb.

F. had also come safely to shore, but being heavier, and having landed first on stomach and face, was much bruised and covered with blood, which however, on examination, appeared to come chiefly from the nose. We were now on an exposed lee shore with a tempest of wind and water driving in, nothing visible in the stormy offing but long lines of roaring breakers, and at our backs a nearly vertical cliff, white with snow and many hundred feet high. After some hunting about I found a place which looked as if the cliff could be climbed, but F. thinking himself entirely exhausted, refused to make the attempt. Covering him up in a sheltered corner of the rocks with the boat sail, which had come ashore, I at last succeeded after many strenuous efforts, in gaining the top. Here was a dense fir forest with much undergrowth and some inches of snow. Creeping under the brush I soon found a wolf track so recent that the falling snow had not yet concealed it, and thinking it must lead to more open ground, as that animal by no means prefers the thickest forests, I followed it, much of the time creeping under the brush on hands and knees in the snow. Half an hour or less brought me clear of the woods to an open sandy expanse across which sand and snow were fiercely driving, but beyond which in less tempestuous intervals could be discerned the breaker-lined coast of the open sea.

Eight miles of as tough a walk as anyone need wish for, in the teeth of the gale and constantly tempted to lie down for sleep and rest at a cost which I well understood, brought me at last to the

zinc house which had been set up on the beach, opposite and close by the ship's anchorage. Arriving in a condition of great exhaustion and nearly speechless, I was rubbed with whiskey, fed with hot mussel soup, wrapped in hot blankets, and was soon able to make known the condition in which I had left my comrade. The captain would not risk any craft in the storm then blowing, but the weather having moderated later, he manned the only remaining whaleboat with eight good men, taking the steering oar himself. He found the place as described, made out the wrecked boat on shore with his glasses, beached his own boat safely, and found F., still living. Going in through heavy surf is much easier than coming off, but our gallant and skillful old skipper was equal to both, and got back without losing a man, bringing with him besides the shipwrecked sailor, all the boat furniture worth saving, and all the beef quarters wrecked with the boat, the whole having been washed in by the surf. The boat itself having been pounded to pieces was left as not worth bringing in.

Thus terminated the beef expedition, and surely few that had cost so much effort, suffering and danger ever came to a more inglorious end. Nevertheless, more than half the beef had been saved, and though well soaked, salted and sanded by its sundry shipwrecks and adventures was by no means without important use on the voyage which followed. But before taking leave forever of that bay which, lovely as it was, had somehow been fraught with so much disaster, I must take the opportunity of relating a tale of most unromantic fishing adventure which came within an ace of a fatal termination, although as it turned out, it was only ridiculous. I must premise by explaining that the adjacent country was so extremely rough, as well as densely wooded, that land game in the vicinity of the ship was scarce and hard to hunt, and enterprises in search of food were mostly confined to the water. Ducks were obtained in considerable quantity by the shotgun brigade, and all the steep rocky points running down beneath the water were covered with crabs by thousands. In fact, at certain stages of tide these were so numerous that a canoe could be filled in a short time. But of all the sports offering in that till then virgin solitude, the most amusing consisted of spearing flounders on

the sand flats. Not far from the middle of the bay lay an extensive sand-bar of which a considerable portion—perhaps fifty or a hundred acres—was exposed at low water, though covered again with surprising suddenness on the reflow of the very high tides there prevailing. In the shoal water around the edge of the bank this amusing fish abounded in immense numbers, and as they lie very close and are exactly the color of the sand as seen through water, they are almost impossible to get sight of till disturbed by the wader, when they scuttle off with a startling dash, showing in the movement a momentary white flash of belly which serves as an excellent but very brief mark.

One day a couple of us repaired to this place as soon as it commenced to show above the falling tide, and leaving the canoe hauled up on the sand, began wading about in search of fish. Now the fun of this sport arises less from the actual booty than from the numerous misses made in darting the spear, and especially from the perpetual and sudden dashes made by the capricious fish from unexpected places, between one's very feet for example. Becoming absorbed in pursuit, I lost all note of time or tide till attracted by the alarmed shouts of my comrade, who by this time was nearly a quarter of a mile off at the upper end of the bar. The quick-rising young flood had already covered the sandy flat and carried away the canoe, which with the paddles in her, was gaily floating up stream. Not a speck of ground was visible, and there was no land within at least two or three miles, and in that strong tideway the only land to be reached by swimming must have been at the head of the bay, several miles distant. As my companion was already so much nearer the runaway canoe, I shouted to him to swim for her at once, which he did while I waded after him, as fast as I could make way through the fast deepening water, under which the last speck of the bar had already disappeared. Fortunately for both of us, my comrade was a stout fellow and an expert swimmer, and after a long and tough pull he overtook the canoe, managed to climb in over one end without swamping her, and commenced the equally difficult job of paddling back against tide to pick me up, which he succeeded in doing, the water having already reached the level of my breast. The thing was so

absolutely ridiculous that we agreed to keep the adventure to ourselves, but it got out, and it was long before we heard the last of the numerous bad jokes made at our expense.

As the time of departure approached, considerable nervousness began to prevail about recrossing the bar, which may not be appreciated by those who do their navigation through well known entrances, sufficiently furnished with charts, beacons, buoys, pilots and steam tugs, and think no more of making a harbor than of crossing a street. But not so with us, who had already seen one tragedy and well knew that any error or disaster must involve much loss of life, yet for whom there was no other mode of getting away. Thus the subject came to furnish the chief topic of conversation before and abaft the mast, and all hands and the cook became immensely learned respecting bars, spits, shoals, channels, breakers and so forth; but the skipper whose brains and courage were to do the deed, kept his own counsel. But when the eventful day of trial came, what with our captain's experience in entering, his many subsequent observations, and the dear-bought knowledge now possessed of the dangerous spit which had already brought us to grief, we successfully avoided all obstacles, and threaded the crooked opening through the surf without check or casualty. As we stood on the quarter deck looking back at the lines of fierce, but to us no longer formidable breakers, showing from that point little sign of accessibility, the captain, who had till now looked as cool as though he had passed all his life in threading out intricate passages over unknown bars, relaxed a little his *sang froid*, and remarked "Do you all know how many cigars it took to get the ship in there? I took a bundle of twenty-five cheroots up into the crosstrees and chewed up every one of them before I came down"—from which we more clearly understood how little his calm exterior indicated the tumult of responsibility and excitement within.

On this occasion, though a gentle land breeze prevailed with a smooth sea, we enjoyed a sight of the most majestic rollers I have ever met with on any coast. Long after passing the breakers and getting clear of the bar into comparatively deep water, we met and surmounted a series of those watery mountains rolling in with

smooth and unbroken crests, which must have measured at least half a mile from ridge to ridge. The brig slowly mounting to the summit would descend the declivity with a gathering speed that set her sails aback and seemed as if no power could stop her from plunging headlong to the bottom, but on reaching the long, smooth valley between, would gracefully reverse her position without shipping a drop, and proceed with indescribable smoothness of movement to mount deliberately to the next huge summit to repeat the process. On that coast the heave of the ocean seems to take the ground in comparatively deep water several miles from land, and gathers into these mountainous but perfectly smooth rollers which on reaching water too shoal to sustain them longer, break into a surf whose grandeur is equalled, by all accounts, only on the West African coast.

As the weather continued good, the skipper who had rebuilt our patched up old wreck and carried her twice safely over the worst bar on the Pacific, found little difficulty in taking her to San Francisco without any particular adventure. The provisions were certainly miscellaneous, and have perhaps rarely been equalled for variety, embracing fish, crabs, mussels, with roots and venison, traded from the natives, not forgetting the much-traveled beef. We had discovered a fine agricultural country for settlement and an inexhaustible supply of fir timber, and had located at least half a dozen town sites. What ultimately became of all those prospectively valuable properties I never knew, as on arrival it soon appeared that the expenses and disasters of the voyage had as usual exceeded the cash results and all my interest was ciphered out to nothing by the most unassailable arithmetic. Besides I found my attention immediately absorbed by the old interests which, distasteful as they were, could no longer be evaded, so I was fain to abandon the future possible results of the land speculations which, however brilliant to sanguine temperaments in some remote era of the future, possessed no value whatever at the present time.

CHAPTER XV

BEGINNING THE PRACTICE OF LAW

The rolling hills of the Contra Costa being by this time yellow with the ripening harvest, there could be no more evasion of the bucolic problem from which I had twice weakly ran away, but which must now be squarely met and disposed of. Of all the circumstances of that period there is not one that afforded less satisfaction at the time, nor now in the retrospect, than that ill-starred agricultural enterprise. It was not merely that it now showed itself likely to prove pecuniarily unprofitable, but its uncongenial character, and particularly the difficulty of getting free from it at all on any reasonable terms, gave one the sensation of being caught in a spring trap, like a bear that enjoys the pleasing alternative of losing his paw if he escapes, or his life, if he remains. There was no longer any illusion about the profit. Wheat had fallen from three cents a pound, at which rate I had purchased the seed, to seven-eighths of one cent, for which I was glad to get rid of the crop, which with all the usual agricultural irony, averaged forty bushels to the acre by actual weight after delivery on the wharf at San Francisco.

Again, even if after selling off the personal property, I should sacrifice the land with its doubtful title for any price it might bring, or even abandon it outright, I had come to feel quite conscious that the former expedient of immersing myself in some futile adventure by land or sea, could no longer afford any satisfactory solution of even the most ordinary ambition for the future. True, I had been trained to nothing and had learned nothing to qualify one for any stable serious pursuit, by which alone, as I began to perceive, the fortunes of individuals are solidly advanced. Then I must proceed to learn, and next came the serious question whether there was yet time to begin again and build from the bottom, so as to acquire a

knowledge and mastery of some kind of effort which should command sufficient usefulness to attract success? While I was pondering such thoughts alone and without any such advisers as young men usually enjoy, a circumstance occurred, trifling in itself, but which served to unlock the doors that seemed shut against me, and to direct my efforts upon a new course, which has beyond doubt given different shape and substance to every subsequent event of my life.

A neighbor of mine owned a few negroes brought from his home in Missouri, one of whom having been sent to San Francisco on an errand, had been claimed by the abolitionists of that place as entitled to freedom under the new State laws. Of course all the row and excitement then incident to such questions incontinently arose, without regard to the interests or wishes of the negro himself who wished for nothing but to be let alone and allowed to remain with his old master and companions. Some sort of proceeding had been commenced in the court of a Justice of the Peace in Oakland, the nature of which I do not now remember. I do not suppose such inferior courts had jurisdiction in *habeas corpus*, but at all events the litigation was of such character that the lawful custody of the negro, as between his old-time owner and the San Francisco mob, was to be decided by the law's representative on a certain day. It appeared that excitement was already running high before I knew much about the matter, and on the day before the afternoon set for the final hearing, the Justice sent for me and expressed his fears of the imminent danger of a serious riot in his court however he might decide the controversy; and begged me to organize a party to maintain order and reënforce the slight means at his disposal for enforcing his decision.

To this I replied that I should decline to take part unless reasonably assured of the master getting his rights. He had brought up and owned the negro from birth and brought him all the way from Missouri, together with all of his other possessions, on the faith of his legal right to emigrate with his property to any territory of the United States, and if a lot of political wind-bags at San José or Sacramento had patched up any State laws or constitution divesting him of such rights, he at least retained a moral

claim to the custody of his servant, if only for the purpose of taking him back to Missouri, and recovering the rights and equities of his first position.

Without actually stating what the decision was to be, the Justice gave me such satisfactory impressions that I agreed to undertake what amounted to the job of an assistant constable without pay, and guaranteed to see the decision of the court executed "if agreeable to justice and satisfactory to me." I therefore spent the evening and part of the night in riding round the country to pick up a dozen or more young fellows whom I knew, and in giving them a little preliminary drill and instruction. Long before the hour set for the hearing, a large and excited mob was on hand from San Francisco, to which place there was already in operation a steam ferry, but when the assistant myrmidons of the law rode in, all mounted on good American horses and suitably equipped for business, those enthusiastic gentry began to realize that the game was not to be won by bawling, and if they wanted the nigger they must fight for him. Leaving a proper horse guard, I placed my men in and about the entrance of the room where, come what might, they could hold the door, and handing my rifle to them, took my seat by the *corpus delicti* among the lawyers in front of the judge, who forthwith opened proceedings.

After emitting sufficient moral and windy platitudes for conciliatory purposes, the decision was much on the lines previously gone over with his Honor, and ended by the unqualified remittance of the darkey to his lawful owner, a decision which, whether expected or not, was received with howls of rage from the mob inside and outside of the room. But the law having spoken, it was now the turn of its extemporized executive, and after a humane and explicit warning to the rabble, the posse received its orders aloud (carefully explained beforehand) in such plain and business-like terms, that the crowd submitted to be hustled out of the way and remained quiescent—if not content—while the champion of law and order marched out with cocked revolver in each hand, closely followed by the owner and a fighting friend of his with the negro between them. Reinforced by all our men at the door, we traversed the outside crowd without actual fighting, and started



Isaac Foster
San Francisco, Cal.
1853
Age 25.

the negro and his white friends on their way home, remaining in line across the street long enough to prevent pursuit. The mob having been overawed and beaten without a fight, which was probably quite lucky for them, there was afterwards little trouble in driving them away from the spot and clearing the court room and vicinity to get fair play for the judge and lawyers.

The principal attorney for the owner was the Hon. Gwyn Page, formerly Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives, but at this time junior in the prominent law firm of Crockett & Page, and a leading lawyer of San Francisco. Having been much impressed, no less by his stately old-fashioned manner than by his fearless and able conduct of the cause, I invited him to spend the night at my house as a pleasanter alternative than crossing the ferry in company with the disappointed mob, promising to mount him both ways and see him on the ferry-boat at any hour he liked next morning. Being a bachelor without domestic entanglements, he frankly accepted the invitation, and in my rural retreat we passed a large part of the night in conversation, during which he so entirely won my affections, that he learned all my history and present embarrassments and gave his opinion that it was by no means too late for me to embark in the study of the law. After making an effort to place me with some desirable preceptor without success, he some time later proposed to employ me at copying in his own office—with opportunity for reading and quizzing—at the salary of forty dollars a month. The sum was less than the plainest boarding could then be obtained for, but as I was to be a supernumerary, their real needs being already supplied by more competent men already members of the bar, I cared nothing for salary, and accepted it gratefully, with the privilege of sleeping in the office.

The firm occupied a leading position in the State, possessing as much practice as they could attend to, chiefly of the most important character. Mr. Joseph B. Crockett, the senior member, and afterward Chief Justice of the State, came from Hopkinsville, Ky., and as man and lawyer ranked second to none, but my relations were chiefly with Mr. Page, whom I came to love with almost filial affection, and by whom I hope and believe the feeling was to a

great extent reciprocated. As he came to appreciate that my elementary education had been neither neglected nor entirely forgotten, and contrasted it with the rough crowd with whom he first found me, and the still rougher adventures which were skillfully elicited by his questions, he was at increasing pains to smooth down the rudeness of speech and manner which of course I had acquired, and as San Francisco then offered few social distractions, he rarely failed to spend an hour or more of each evening in discussing with me what I had read during the day. As I slept in the office and the preparation of my simple fare occupied but little time, my habit was to rise as I had been long accustomed to, at daybreak and devote every hour to study that could be spared from the writing that was set me to do. Thus I not only covered the ground fast, but was solidly grounded in what I read by Page's questions and explanations of the evening. In this way it was not long before I had mastered Blackstone and Kent, and was put to the best text-books on special branches of the law, and required to hunt up and familiarize myself with the leading cases there referred to. Within a few months I was entrusted with the framing—subject of course to revision—of pleadings and original contracts, and I remember that one of the first of the latter documents that I sketched was a mortgage from the celebrated Cornelius K. Garrison (whom I had good reason to remember in Panama, and who was not more astonished to meet me in a San Francisco lawyer's office, than I was to find him a prosperous real estate operator) to the equally well-known Montgomery P. Blair, to secure notes for a hundred thousand dollars, bearing interest payable monthly at the rate of several per cent a month, compounding monthly if not paid. Garrison was a remarkable character in more ways than one. After getting his start at the notorious 'bank' on the Grand Plaza corner Calle San Juan de Dios, in Panama, he accumulated a large fortune in San Francisco and New York, and died at the latter place a few years since leaving an estate of twenty millions.

In Panama he fought a duel with the celebrated Vicissimus Turner, which, well known as it was at the time, there can be few now living to remember. It was after midnight when they quarreled, both having drunk quite as much as they could conveniently

carry, and being both counted desperate men, agreed to settle the affair at once. The hour not being a convenient one to find seconds and other frills, they concluded to dispense with formalities and repair to the promenade on top of the wall of the old fort, and having tossed for the word, each to lay hold of the lapel of the other's coat and fire together at the word. Turner won the word, and the position being taken, both fired, but having knocked their arms together, in bringing up the pistols, neither was hurt. It was then agreed to load up and try it again, but Turner having a single-barreled Derringer required another percussion cap which he did not possess, and was reduced to borrowing from Garrison, who took one from an unused chamber of his revolver, for the purpose. This did not fit the Derringer's large nipple, and in trying to force it on was dropped and lost. As G. was grumblingly removing another for the same purpose, T. burst out laughing, and on the reason being indignantly demanded replied that he could not help laughing when he considered what a d—d fool G. was for taking so much trouble to lend him a percussion cap when he, G., had him at his mercy. This view also struck G.'s sense of humor, and the dispute was soon amicably adjusted, the principals finding their way home by mutual assistance, and not without considerable difficulty. Turner afterwards became judge of the District Court in Humboldt County, California, where I last saw him about a year later, and where I presume he was ultimately gathered to his fathers in the odor of judicial sanctity and respectability.

About this time Mr. Page began to entrust me with the trials of small cases in courts not of record, and even to aid him in other trials of more importance. One of the first of the former, though of no great consequence in point of parties or amount, was of great moment to me, and of some importance to the public. It was an action of *replevin* to recover certain personal baggage detained from the owner by the proprietor of a boarding-house, or alleged inn, for non-payment of a bill for entertainment. The action was brought by me, with Page's approval, on the ground that the alleged inn was in fact a boarding-house, the proprietor of which, unlike an inn-keeper, possessed no lien on his guest's baggage,

either at common law or under any then existing statute. The case having been decided for the defendant, and the decision affirmed in the County Court, went to the Supreme Court which reversed both decisions and gave judgment for the plaintiff, thus definitely fixing the law of the question, in that State, in the absence of direct statutory enactment. As the action had been brought in the magistrate's court in my own name as attorney, though not yet admitted to practice, a doubt rose whether I would be permitted to appear in the Appellate Courts, and as my employers generously insisted on my going on with it in order to vindicate the opinion given in the first instance, I was driven to inquire of defendant's counsel whether or not he would take advantage of my not having been yet admitted, and received a hearty and emphatic reply in the negative.

The attorney who behaved thus generously after learning from me the facts involved, was no less a person than Col. Edward D. Baker of Illinois, formerly Colonel of the 4th Regiment Illinois Volunteers in the Mexican War, afterwards Senator of the United States, from the newly admitted State of Oregon, and subsequently Brigadier General of Volunteers in the Army of the United States; a lawyer distinguished on both sides of the continent, with whom I was soon afterwards admitted to a professional partnership, and with whom I continued to maintain the closest relations of business and friendship till his death by my side on the battlefield of Ball's Bluff, October 21st, 1861.

After remaining nearly a year with Crockett & Page, I naturally began to look about for some opportunity of commencing practice on my own account. My examination was successfully passed, I think sometime in the year 1854. The Chief Examiner for the Supreme Court (whose license admitted to practice in all State Courts) was Mr. E. B. Crocker, an experienced and distinguished lawyer, who subsequently admitted to me that a California-made lawyer was such a novelty to him that he made the examination, at least on elementary subjects, as searching as he knew how, from curiosity to know if it were possible for such a *lusus naturae* to have really learned any law under such circumstances. I gave a good account of myself in real estate, commercial, criminal and

even maritime law, which later could hardly be considered within his province as examiner for the State Courts, and the only question on which I failed to give a more or less satisfactory reply was in regard to the definition of the antiquated term 'essoign' day, which as it has been obsolete for centuries, really belonged rather in the domain of history than law. I will add, however, that I was not long in burnishing up my memory on the defective point, and though I have quit the bar for more than thirty years I fancy few English-speaking persons entertain today a more praise-worthy knowledge of that old Norman-French term than the student who then stranded on it.

I have since been admitted to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, 4th January, 1858, and to the Supreme Court of the United States, 17th December, 1860, as well as to other judicial tribunals of less renown, but the Sacramento event of course holds the chief and foremost place in memory over all similar ordeals.

Although Col. Baker was then about forty-three years of age, and widely known throughout the State, my association with him in the case referred to—though on opposite sides—and the admiration of many traits of his mind and character, particularly captivating to young and ardent temperaments, led to as much intimacy as could readily prevail consistently with such disparity of age and attainment. He was by no means dissipated—in fact, he was absolutely without any of the ordinary masculine vices, except a passion for cards—but with all his rich stores of memory and transcendent talent in statement and speech, there was absolutely no trace of order or system about his character. So far from keeping any pecuniary accounts, he had not even a docket of his cases, relying solely on his memory and a mass of papers carried in his hat and about his person. His office was a bare, half-furnished and desolate apartment, where nothing that was wanted could ever be found, and from whose dreary precincts he himself shrunk as from a prison cell. He cared nothing for money, squandering his large fees as fast as received, and in spite of his great earnings, was most generally penniless. A street beggar was as likely to get from him a twenty-dollar piece as a quarter-dollar, when his pocket was full, and perhaps an hour later he would be unable

to satisfy the most deserving creditor. Though devoid of all sorts of affectation or pretense, he was in almost every respect unlike other men. Even his personal history was remarkable. Born in England of humble Quaker parents in 1811, he was brought by them when but nine years of age to Philadelphia, where as a child he labored for a time in a cotton factory. Accompanying his parents in a later emigration to Illinois, some accidental circumstance directed his attention to religious subjects as professed by the sect of Campbellites, and long before his legal maturity he had acquired wide reputation as one of the most eloquent preachers in the State. At twenty he married a lady with some property, which was soon squandered or lost, though the happiness of the domestic relation remained unimpaired through all the vicissitudes of fortune till his death. Of course in a young and growing state like Illinois, with its ambitious and able bar, ebullient politics and chaotic law, it was inevitable that such a genius should ultimately find his way into the law, and having studied its elements while still in the pulpit, he was admitted to practice soon after he was of age, elected to the legislature as a Whig in 1837, to the State Senate in 1840, and to Congress in 1844. He abandoned his seat in Congress to raise and command the 4th Regiment Illinois Volunteers in the war with Mexico. At Cerro Gordo, after the wounding of Shields, he took command by seniority of his brigade, whose final charge swept the enemy from their partially entrenched position on the heights. After enduring an attack of fever in Panama which brought him very near death, he reached California in 1851, where he was not long in placing himself far in advance of all the gallant lances of that able and distinguished bar.

The more I came to love and admire that strong and generous, but ill-regulated and erratic character, the more forcibly it appeared even to my juvenile perceptions, that to acquire the solid place and power at the bar which he deserved, something more was requisite than grand bursts of eloquence on special and irregular occasions. It was not enough to confuse judges and bend juries to his will by sporadic and uncertain flights, however grand and noble. The solid and substantial reputation which alone

can successfully carry the superstructure of success, must be based, in this profession as in all others, on order and system; and the client must possess the assured conviction, not merely that his interests will be brilliantly handled at the last moment, but that they will have been judiciously advised, directed and kept in ready array, and above all that the advocate be always posted, on guard and ready for the fray.

Baker with all his general reading, abounding talent, and tremendous energy in the shock of actual contest, was never to be found, never ready, and always wanting in those sober but essential qualities. In short he required to have his splendid powers supplemented by those of some less brilliant but more orderly and laborious associate, and after pressing such views on him with more or less conviction, I modestly suggested myself as the *Camena Egeria* for this splendid but erratic and uncertain *Numa*. The unequal partnership was accepted by Baker after a single night's reflection, and in a far more complete and generous manner than I expected or intended, for notwithstanding that he, at least in the first instance, possessed all the elements of success, and I none, yet when some months afterwards having some joint funds in my hands, I inquired his idea of the proper proportion of their distribution, he promptly replied that he never had been and never would be associated with any partner except on the single basis of equality. My remonstrance was of no avail, and the only modification I could prevail on him to consent to was, that while I would continue to aid him in the criminal part of the business, the fees thence accruing should go to him alone.

The association was immediately, and I think I may say remarkably, successful. Baker being hitherto difficult to find and by no means dependable at the critical moment, had derived most of his business from other lawyers throughout the City and State, who desired his transcendently successful influence with juries. We now took and furnished a fine suite of apartments, supplied them with a well-selected professional library (on credit), and at once acquired a clientage which, though attracted by his great reputation, was retained and increased by the close and careful preparation and attention given to their business.

One of the first, or perhaps I should say the first, case of importance that I personally tried made a lasting impression on me, and may serve to show that although the junior partner had certainly enjoyed a wonderful piece of good fortune, his lot was nevertheless not entirely one of 'sweetness and light.'

Baker had already brought an action, or rather several actions, in behalf of an Illinois man named L., against a number of so-called bankers, or in plain and proper language, money-lenders, to replevin a large quantity—\$40,000 worth in all—of lard, purchased on speculation by L. for cash and stored for a rise with one G., a warehouseman and commission merchant. G. having drifted into failing circumstances, proceeded during L.'s absence and without his knowledge, to pledge this property to the pawn-broking 'bankers' aforesaid to secure his own notes, until after some weeks the whole of it had been so disposed of, when his announced failure brought L. back from the mines to the city. Baker had commenced the actions on general principles only, and more from his strong sympathy with L. than with any great expectation of maintaining them, unless by some chance of formal irregularity in the transactions which might possibly crop out on investigation.

There was little probability of such error or neglect to be expected from several of the shrewdest and most experienced private bankers in the place, but on further study of the cases it seemed to me they might be maintained on the old principle that though a factor necessarily clothed as such with possession and other *indiciae* of ownership, may sell his principal's goods as a usual function of a known and advertised agent or factor, he cannot validly pledge them; the latter act being outside the scope of his ordinary duty and authority, and therefore sufficiently unusual to put the pledgee on inquiry, as to the real extent of his rights as factor.

This view, with sustaining cases from other states being submitted to my friend Page, was approved by him as matter of law, and warmly adopted by Baker, and the cases prepared accordingly. The defendants were severally represented by some of the ablest members of the San Francisco bar, among them being Doyle,

McAllister, Whitcomb, Pringle, Felton, and others, who had arranged to combine on the first as a test case, the facts in all being similar. While I had carefully prepared and briefed the case both as respected law and facts, I had no expectation whatever of pitting myself against those renowned champions of the bar, except as a humble and comparatively irresponsible assistant, but on the day of trial, Baker could not be found. In vain the terrified L. mustered all his friends and ransacked all the faro tables and every other possible and impossible place in town; the fateful hour arrived and I stood alone. As L. was even more frightened than myself, I considered whether I should face the music or let the combined enemy take judgment by default on the chance of getting the case subsequently reopened on a more promising occasion. On reflection I considered such pusillanimous course would be less than justice to the Court, the plaintiff or myself, and determined to go on with the trial, though with more abject, pale-faced fear than I have since sometimes felt when moving on a hostile battery. It was, I fear, a pitiful and cowardly appeal I made for continuance to the mild, and as I thought, sympathizing Judge, who I think was Shattuck of the Superior Court of San Francisco, but all the hostile giants jumped on me at once, indignantly asserting that I was counsel on the record, had myself notified them for trial, and was thus without the slightest legal or moral pretext for continuance. The Judge felt obliged to take the same view, and bade me proceed. In the course of putting in my testimony, I was obliged to place the defaulting factor himself on the stand to establish some formal fact lying only within his knowledge, and when McAllister took him for cross-examination, there ensued an excoriation such as a malfeasant witness has rarely received in court. On some pretext, the lawyer successfully maintained his right to go beyond the brief subject of the direct examination, and dragged the wretched witness through all the miserable facts, subjecting him alternately, as such a master well knew how, to the scorn, indignation, ridicule and contempt of judge, jury and spectators.

While this spectacle was in progress, the Court adjourned for dinner, and in the crowd jostling each other down the staircase,

finding myself next to G., I foolishly allowed myself to say a few encouraging words of no special significance, but which of course had much better been omitted under the circumstances.

The words were hardly spoken, when I perceived the bad taste, if not impropriety, of any private communication with a witness still practically on the stand, and realized the foolish figure I should cut if at the resumption of the examination, McAllister should ask the usual question, whether the witness had been spoken to about the case since adjournment? Seeing no other honest way out of the scrape I had so thoughtlessly walked into, and believing that McAllister would not be insensible to a personal appeal, I went directly to his office, told him the entire story, that the present was the first considerable case I had ever tried, and that unless he should extend a generous forbearance he would oblige me to forestall his thunder, by volunteering an acknowledgment of my folly in open court. Looking me straight in the eye, he said "Do you give me your word of honor that you have related in good faith, everything that passed?" "Yes, unqualifiedly." "Then, my dear fellow, you shall never hear any more of it from me."

Just before the summing up to the jury, Baker walked into court as coolly and composedly as though he had spent the day in performing every conceivable duty to his client, myself and the rest of the world and added, as it were, insult to injury, by declining to give me any aid whatever, on the plea that he had not heard the testimony. Being unable to move him either by denunciation or appeal, I therefore proceeded with many misgivings, to address the jury. Now I knew well enough, theoretically (for Baker, one of the most effective orators in America, had constantly insisted on it) that a jury speech to be effective, must come hot from the emotions; that while one may consider well the order, arrangement and arguments, the words and sentences must never be prepared except at the peril of grandiloquence, stiltedness and weakness. Nevertheless, having myself taken a pathetic view of the manner of our client's spoliation by a trusted friend, during his absence, I was anxious to communicate some of my feeling to the jury, and had thought out a few—only two or three—very fetching sentences. These were duly fired off at the jury, but under the legal

instructions and charge of the Court, the verdict was against me; though the cases having been subsequently argued in the Supreme Court were reversed, and the principle contended for, firmly established in California.

In delivering my slyly prepared slices of eloquence, I felt a little guilty, as everyone must who simulates a red-hot passion in phrases coolly prepared beforehand, and cast a surreptitious glance or two at Baker, but as he was leaning his head on his hands, over a table, apparently half-asleep, I flattered myself I had escaped detection by the critic I most valued and feared. But after all was over and we had got back to the quiet of the office, he remarked, "You made a very fair speech which would have been good, but for the blemish of those prepared sentences which you, no doubt, considered very fine."

"What possesses you with the idea that any sentences were prepared? Can you specify them?" Whereupon he repeated them, word for word, with a cold-blooded and merciless fidelity that made me shudder. The lesson sank so deep that ever since if some phrase that seems particularly fine, forces itself on my attention in advance, I make a point of avoiding it. The fact is that though great speakers of set orations, like Webster or Everett, may deliver a literary essay from memory, with studied gesture and carefully regulated emotion, the off-hand orators of the people cannot venture to smuggle in false notes or simulated passion, without subjecting to dangerous contrast, the setting and the frame.

The San Francisco bar at that time abounded with able men culled from every state in the Union, embracing in addition to those already mentioned, such celebrated lawyers as Hoge, Shafter, Williams, Randolph, McDongal, Inge, Thornton, Crittendon, Peachy, and many others distinguished in every branch of the civil and common law, and embracing all the numerous varieties of professional talent that contribute to make up a brilliant whole. The community with its pursuits and interests was new, the late Mexican jurisprudence had been abandoned so far as it could be disentangled from land titles; all sorts of questions long set at rest in older states, were pressing for solution, and from

simple, sheer necessity, the judiciary, spurred on by the bar, was running a race of law-making with the legislature. Lawyers were daily obliged to commit themselves to opinions affecting great interests at home and abroad, with little adjudicated law to go upon, and based rather on their notions of what views the courts might be induced to take, than on existing statutes or recorded cases. Thus a majority of cases brought to bar afforded, in the hands of young, able, and ambitious men, opportunity not merely for pyrotechnic jury speeches, but for arguments to the bench which attacked and discussed everything, effectually sifting the real value of principles and maxims elsewhere accepted as elemental or taken for granted; so that perhaps no other great forum just then afforded equal facilities either for studying diversity of mental character or acquiring broad views of the principles, scope and philosophy of the law.

So also, the complicated facts and relations requiring the application of such principles, were of still more infinite variety. The almost instantaneous planting of an energetic and speculative community entirely composed, like the bar, of young and active men, so remote from all others, both as respects time and distance, prevented the ordinary commercial and financial coöperation with neighboring cities, and led to emergencies and events that could scarcely occur at all under any ordinary circumstances of communication. One of the most striking illustrations of such peculiarity of condition, occurred in the first months of 1855, when, following the embarrassment of the great private banking firm of Page, Bacon & Co., a local panic ensued that caused the immediate suspension of every bank, saving's bank, express, and other concern transacting a deposit business, in the State. With insignificant exceptions, these were obliged to close their doors with large quantities of bullion—impossible to convert suddenly into coin—lying in their vaults, the bullion asset in possession of Adams Express Company alone at the time of its suspension exceeding a million and a half dollars. Corporate banks were then prohibited by law and the only lawful currency was coin, and the only difficulty was a sudden appreciation of the insufficiency of all the coin existing in the country to make actual necessary exchanges,

and the impossibility of augmenting it in reasonable time from any other quarter. The only mail communication with the Eastern States and Europe was by steamer *via* the Isthmus, and as it required sixty days to send a message to New York and receive a reply, a ruinous havoc was wrought among wealthy firms and institutions, simply for want of adequate communications with the rest of the business world.

But notwithstanding such novel, or abnormal obstacles and disasters, an immense shipping and commercial business grew up in San Francisco, during those years, with Europe, Asia and the Eastern States of the Union, and under the comparative freedom of trade then enjoyed, with the consequent easy exchanges and moderate cost of production, the country's shipping tonnage, enormously stimulated by the new markets of California and the Pacific, reached and actually passed that of Great Britain, theretofore and now again, the largest ship owner of the world. The new business of the round voyage from and back to New York, *via* San Francisco, China and Liverpool, by furnishing continuous freights in both directions, even contributed to originate and build up such intermediate foreign ports as Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, and produced a new class of American clipper ships of large capacity like the *Norma*, the *Palmer*, *Flying Cloud*, *White Squall* and others, which placed American shipbuilders and seamen at the head of their professions. It was not till greedy schemers and incapable statesmen at last succeeded in crushing the enterprise of our merchants, by pushing to absurd lengths the plausible fallacy of 'protection,' that that pre-eminence was at length destroyed and American shipping gradually driven from the ocean. At the present time the mischief seems fast extending to the mass of population, and under pretext of securing to a handful of manufacturing capitalists a monopoly of the 'home market,' we have managed to exclude our manufactured products from all other markets, increased the expense of living in every household, and seriously impaired the prosperity of the millions engaged in commerce, agriculture and shipping.

Among the financial wrecks of the California bank panic of 1855, was the private savings bank of R. & S. at the corner of Clay

and Montgomery Streets, which failed for a large sum principally due to a great number of comparatively small depositors, largely belonging to the working classes. This institution having after the crash employed our firm as counsel, it fell to me to conduct a laborious examination of its assets and accounts, and I may say I owe to that single case a fairly good understanding of the system of double entry bookkeeping, hitherto as inscrutable to my untrained apprehension as the procession of the equinoxes. Unlike most of the suspended banks, this firm had exhausted both coin and bullion before giving up the fight; nevertheless it was solvent in the usual sense of that abused word, i.e., provided the large excess of speculative assets standing on its books could be made to realize anything near cost. Those assets consisted of suspended paper, loans to, or interests in, all sorts of enterprises not yet arrived at fruition, inchoate gold mines, litigated land claims, and so forth, which in the temporary destruction of credit, the rush by the country upon the city, and the wild storm of writs and attachments, mostly perished as assets; being either destroyed or frittered away in the innumerable proceedings of individual creditors then unrestrainable by equitable proceedings, and invariably commenced, as the law then permitted, by the actual seizure in attachment, of every real or supposed item of property. S., the junior partner, being by temperament averse to excited controversy, gave up the contest early and retired to his home in the Eastern States, but R. though older, was of tougher fiber, and notwithstanding he would inevitably have been murdered if seen in the streets, and therefore labored under extraordinary disadvantages, he made a long and brave fight against the inevitable. He even induced me, against Baker's advice, to preside at and generally take charge of a public meeting of his creditors called at Maguire's Opera House, to enable him—under police protection—to offer his explanation of the affair. The house—which was not the large structure of the same name subsequently built, but nevertheless of generous dimensions—was densely packed by a silent but sullen crowd with a body of police in front of the footlights, myself and a small party of fighting friends seated on the stage, when R. appeared from the stage entrance in rear to offer his promised explanation. The

exasperation of the crowd at the actual sight of their *bête noir*, almost immediately burst all bounds. The benches were torn up for weapons, and a rush made for the stage which overwhelmed the police contingent, and left myself and friends just time to close round R. and his books, and get them safely away by a rear door. The litigation went on *ad infinitum*, but even R.'s desire for a *vis à vis* explanation with his creditors was heard of no more.

The clientage of Baker & Wistar, which owing to the former's wide reputation as an advocate had been large from the first, had after awhile increased to dimensions which during the remainder of my residence in San Francisco absorbed my entire time during seven days of each week. Aided by a competent translator and a sufficient number of assistants, organized to the best of my ability, I found no more time for relaxation than was afforded by an hour's gallop every evening at dusk, and a long walk over the surrounding sand hills at daybreak every Sunday morning. The records of professional practice in civil cases usually supply few items of general interest, but in some celebrated criminal prosecutions, in which I was concerned with my chief, the case was different. Two of these in fact, although directly concerning the fortunes of individual malefactors, rise to almost historical dignity, in view of their connection with the celebrated Vigilance Committee of 1856; and a third ended in a dramatic climax which had sufficient interest of its own.

The first was the prosecution of one Cora, a well-known professional gambler, for the murder of Richardson, U. S. Marshal of the District. The latter was a man addicted to drinking and extremely dangerous when so excited, being reputed to have killed a number of men both in Texas and California in private combat, and indeed sometimes without much combat at all. One evening about midnight, having had a verbal difference with Cora at the 'Blue Wing,' a celebrated Montgomery Street saloon, both being under the influence of previous festivity, they repaired to the street to discuss the matter alone. The bystanders induced them to return and make it up just as relations were becoming dangerous, but the difficulty recurring, they again repaired to the street, both men concurring in the desire for a private discussion, and insisting

on the others remaining behind. A few minutes later, the report of a pistol being heard, the others ran out to find Richardson lying dead, opposite a closed doorway round the adjacent corner, with Cora standing over him. The remaining facts rested mainly on the assertions of the latter, who stated that they had walked round to, and taken position in, the doorway, when the discussion becoming hot, he had caught a glimpse of a flash of steel in R.'s hands, and though himself what is known as a 'fighting man,' being afraid of the still more desperate character of the other ruffian, he had instantly drawn, cocked and shot Richardson through the heart. Two facts gave a certain confirmation to this statement. R.'s sheath was empty and his bowie-knife was found—but unfortunately not till the following morning—lying in the cellar area under the iron grating upon which both parties were standing. A woman of bad character in passing along Montgomery Street, had heard an angry voice which she could not identify, exclaim, 'You are drawing on me,' or some similar words.

This homicide was the occasion of much public excitement, and under its pressure and the clamor of the newspapers, the sheriff made unusual efforts to summon a respectable jury who should command the confidence of the public, several of them being well-known merchants of high standing as citizens. At the trial which was conducted by four counsel on a side—including Byrne, the District Attorney—before a judge of conceded integrity, and a jury selected with unusual care, the verdict failed; the jury being about equally divided between murder, manslaughter and acquittal. Before a second trial could be had, Cora was taken from the jail by the Vigilance Committee and hung the next day, after an alleged, but secret midnight trial without counsel or witnesses for the prisoner, or the safeguard of lawful oaths and general rules administered by a qualified and impartial judge. At that secret trial by the committee's celebrated council of twenty-one whose unanimous vote was required for conviction, it strangely happened that no less than three members had also sat upon the jury by which the the prisoner had been lawfully tried, on which occasion two of them had voted for 'manslaughter' and the other for acquittal! Whether Cora was guilty of willful premeditated murder, or acted

in lawful self-defense, was, in consequence of the paucity of evidence and his own bad character, enveloped in much doubt, yet three respectable merchants, all inclined to the liberal view when subjected to the oaths and aided by the wise precautions with which the law seeks to solve such capital questions, cast all doubt and hesitation to the winds when such precautions were omitted and the voting done in secret, behind closed doors, without any orderly public responsibility, and under the pressure of the passions which swept unchecked around them.

Another case of ours that was cut short at an earlier stage by the murder of the prisoner by the same lawless gang, was that of Casey, held for the murder of the notorious 'James King, of William'—as he called himself. King was a broken down banker or money dealer, who had recently commenced editing a small scurrilous evening paper, which he succeeded in bringing into notice by devoting his leading column to the daily abuse, without much regard to facts, of some public or well-known person. Having fallen out with Casey, who was the editor of a Sunday paper of not much more fragrant character, he denounced him—*inter alia*—as a former convict in a New York prison, and declined to receive or publish what negative proof could be offered to the contrary. Finding the charge cut deep, as intended, he continued to ring all the changes on it for a week or more, refusing the victim's challenge to fight, and offensively daring him to a street attack, for which he avowed himself in print, as always ready and prepared.

As none but a violent remedy was to be had, Casey entered King's office one afternoon, a short time prior to his usual hour for departure, and personally notified him to arm, as he, Casey, intended to kill him publicly on sight. The same afternoon, as King, having come from his office in Merchant Street, turned into Montgomery, the principal street of the city, walking in the middle of the roadway, Casey stepped from the sidewalk, threw off a large cloak he was wearing, and with the warning, distinctly heard by the bystanders, 'Draw and defend yourself,' drew his pistol. King stopped, faced him, and partially drew from his overcoat pocket a cocked pistol, whereupon Casey fired, inflicting a wound of which King died about a week later. It may be conceded that

Casey fired an instant prematurely, since 'fighting men' do not ordinarily maintain the courage of one who, being himself prepared, fires before his adversary's weapon is leveled, or at the least fully displayed; but he was acting under excessive and willful provocation, and down to that point all his acts were in accord with the everyday customs and standard ideas of the country; and, public excitement apart, no California jury would have convicted him of anything more heinous than manslaughter. The Governor of the State—Johnson—offered to become officially and personally responsible for the safe custody and speedy trial of the prisoner before Norton, a judge of the highest public and private character, but on the day after King's death, Casey, having been forcibly taken from the county jail, was hung by the Committee on a beam projected from an upstairs window of their fortified stronghold, in the presence of at least 10,000 of their adherents marshaled in arms, of whom more than half were foreigners. His trial, if he had any, was in secret, without counsel or witnesses of his own, and without the allowance of any communication with his family or friends.

Still another capital case of ours was that of R. B., a young man respectably connected in Philadelphia, who without cause and in mere drunken frenzy, killed an inoffensive and unarmed man in a brutal and cowardly manner that excited the numerous German population to a white heat. This wretch's habits had become so degraded, that his uncle, the manager of one of the principal express companies, could find no better employment for him than driving one of their city delivery wagons. Arriving at his home one night, drunk, a low woman with whom he lived in an alley of unsavory reputation, running north from Washington above Dupont Street, pointed out to him a small man of half his size, whom she declared had attempted to rob her. B., without asking a question, drew his pistol and rushed for the man indicated, who turned out to be a German of good character, only three days arrived in the country, and unable to speak a word of English. Though ignorant of any cause of offense, yet being unarmed, and seeing himself chased by an infuriated man with a pistol, he ran out of the alley and down the middle of Washington Street, closely

followed by B. who, when he found himself unable to overtake the German, fired from a short distance, the bullet striking the flying man in the back of the head and making its exit near the centre of the forehead.

Col. James, and James A. McDougal (afterwards U. S. Senator from California) having been retained for defence by the uncle, thought proper to secure for their side our professional aid, while the German population held excited meetings, subscribed a large fund and retained several distinguished gentlemen, at the head of whom was Mr. S. W. Inge of Alabama, to assist the District Attorney. The ground of defence at first agreed on by counsel, was the familiar one of insanity from long-continued dissipation, and the uncle, P., was instructed to procure all available information and testimony tending to sustain that view. Such testimony not proving very strong, Baker declared it insufficient, and insisted on the substitution of what is popularly called 'self-defense.' At a meeting of counsel, this radical change of plan found no other advocate, but was reluctantly agreed to in deference to Baker's deliberate judgment and unsurpassed experience, but P. was so opposed to it he had to be plainly told he must accept our view or procure other counsel. As the case seemed desperate he acceded, under this stress, and before long produced an extremely ill-looking and hard-featured individual named Collins, who would swear that he was present and saw the homicide, and at the time of, or an instant prior to the fatal shot, the deceased had placed his right hand under his coat simultaneously with a halting or hesitating movement toward his right. On cross examination, first privately by myself, and again in presence of all the counsel for the defense, he admitted that he kept a low groggery much visited by the prisoner, whom he had long known, and with whom he was in fact intimate; and could assign no explanation but mere accident for the extraordinary fact of his presence so far from his accustomed haunts at a moment so critical for his friend. But on the other hand, he was so well informed of the event, and endured so well a searching cross examination respecting the persons and objects in the vicinity, the vehicles in the street, and other minor facts of the *res gestae*, that notwithstanding his vulnerable character,

vicious associations, and unprepossessing appearance, it was not deemed proper to suppress him on mere suspicion, against the wishes of the prisoner and his friends, and it was decided to risk him on the stand.

The excitement of the trial was such that a number of special deputies had to be sworn in to protect the Court and counsel, after which the prosecution briefly proved the homicide, and it fell to me as junior to open for the defense and commence with the witnesses. Almost the only affirmative testimony on our side, besides that of Collins, was proof of the finding by the police, soon after the occurrence, of an old rusty bowie knife, under the wooden steps of a house a short distance *above* the debouch of the alley, i.e., in a direction contrary to that taken by the deceased and his pursuer. Collins' direct testimony was given with a readiness and precision not calculated to allay my suspicions, after which he was turned over to the prosecution, and Inge, the lion of that side, for the first time addressed himself actively to the case, and proceeded to cross-examine. But instead of the ordinary expedients of tearing all concealment from the character, occupation and associations of the witness, or requiring him to explain what curious coincidence procured his timely presence on the scene, or confusing his statements of the persons and vehicles in the vicinity, Inge ominously contented himself by committing the witness irrevocably to his original statement in a manner to exclude any subsequent modification, concluding somewhat as follows:

"Your testimony is of course important, and tallies with your statement on direct examination, but by way of testing the accuracy of your observation and memory, I will ask you a few questions respecting the killing itself, which I desire you to answer with deliberation. You say that at, or previous to the moment when the prisoner fired, the deceased made a halt, or half halt, inclining to the right?" "Yes, sir." "Well are you sure it was to the right; might it not, for instance, have been toward the other side, the left?" "No sir, it could not have been; I saw something serious would happen and was noticing particularly." "Then you are equally certain it was his right, and not his left hand that the deceased placed under his coat as though to draw a weapon?"

"Yes sir, I am sure of that." "You swear positively, then, to the right side and the right hand?" "Yes, sir." "And do not wish in any case or in any manner to qualify that part of your testimony?" "No, sir."

The witness was then allowed to stand down, and the prosecution called several prominent citizens who were present at, or immediately after the event, who severally corroborated the statement of the first one, which was substantially as follows: He saw the shooting, but noticed no hesitation nor sign of halting by the deceased, who from first to last was using all his efforts to escape. When shot, he fell instantly dead, and lay as he fell without a motion. Witness was the first to reach the body, which was lying on its face with arms extended, holding in the right hand a cigar still burning!

At this moment, so terrible for the defense, the responsibility of closing for the prisoner belonged to Baker, who was not the man to quail before that or any emergency. The single frail raft to which, for want of a better, the prisoner's life had been trusted, seemed to have sunk under us, and left us confusedly floundering without a plan. Contemptuous laughter burst from the German mob, the hostile lawyers illy concealed their complacent smiles, and judge and jury looked with serious faces to see whether the catastrophe was fatal, or might even yet in any way be met. But the dauntless Baker—veteran in countless forensic battles—rose cool and undismayed to the occasion. Without a visible tremor or change of countenance he addressed his superb talents to the task, and his plausible arguments and matchless eloquence snatched even that blood-dyed wretch from the gallows by dividing the jury, four of whom were constrained to vote for the lower grade of manslaughter. On a second trial for his life, the prisoner was convicted of the last-named offence, and sentenced to a term of three years and eight months in the San Quentin penitentiary, but the judgment having been reversed on a technicality reserved, the case was again remanded. On a third trial the accused was convicted of murder, but the Supreme Court again reversed the judgment, on the ground that the second trial having been complete by sentence, the prisoner had been unlawfully placed in a second and

new jeopardy of his life for the same offence, and with some sharp comments, directed the Court below to arraign and try him for manslaughter only. The Vigilance Committee attacked and captured the county jail while he was awaiting the new trial ordered, but P. having sagaciously joined them and contributed his important influence to their aid, on condition that his nephew should withdraw all the later proceedings in his behalf, and serve out the term of imprisonment awarded on the second trial, the contract was faithfully executed; the prisoner's term expiring in time to permit him to serve in the approaching Civil War, where I subsequently saw him wearing the uniform of a staff captain in the quartermaster department.

Here were three notorious homicides all of which received from a mob, claiming to be respectable and well intentioned, the best adjudication it was capable of bestowing. The first man, guilty of defending himself from instant death by the only effectual means, was hung without a scruple. The second, goaded to frenzy by a wrong which could scarcely be rectified without violence, after vainly trying to obtain an equal fight, killed his adversary after fair personal notice, his principal or only error, according to the accepted standards of the place and time, being that he fired a second too soon. For him the punishment was the same. But the third, who committed what scarcely anyone can now doubt, was an unprovoked and wanton murder, was allotted the trifling penalty frequently inflicted for larceny and embezzlement, with the mob's full approval and consent. Perhaps no comment could much improve the illustration which these cases afford of the danger and injustice of mob rule where a full and fair judicial organization of the public's own choosing already prevails; and it would seem impossible for any intelligent person to confuse this view with those expressed on a former page respecting the administration of off-hand justice in an unorganized community.

CHAPTER XVI

TERMINATION OF CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCES

One of the unexpected and startling events that seemed always happening in San Francisco in its early days, was the gigantic failure, and flight of Henry Meiggs, who in the desperate effort to control the entire trade in lumber, had uttered and used as collateral security for his own notes, an enormous quantity of fraudulent and forged city scrip or warrants. These having been habitually issued by the city in even amounts of a hundred, five hundred and a thousand or several thousand dollars, were very convenient for such use, and were in high credit. Meiggs having obtained a position for a near relation in the City Controller's Office, was enabled to get possession of entire printed books of blank warrants, which after having the requisite signatures forged upon them, were issued in enormous amounts. The game was worked a long time, pieces about to mature being taken up with new ones, and notes falling due paid with the proceeds of new ones, secured by new collateral of the same valuable kind. Meiggs was a member of the City Council, and reputed wealthy, but when his affairs became so complicated that exposure was at any time possible, he obtained a fast-sailing schooner, which was kept fully manned and ready for sea, off Rincon Point. One night, having ascertained that detection was certain to occur next day, he removed his family and portable effects from the fine mansion in which he lived on Telegraph Hill, to the yacht and at once made sail on her. Next day one fact brought out another, till almost every person of substance in the city found himself in some way interested, and pretty much all business was suspended; excited mobs surged about the principal streets in search of the offender.

At last the time and manner of his flight becoming definitely

known, it occurred to someone that the day was without the usual sea-breeze; in fact, that rare condition in San Francisco, a dead calm prevailed. About the same time, a pilot reported the yacht as tossing helplessly about in the neighborhood of the bar, and a rush was made to the wharves where, in the absence of steam tugs (not yet introduced) a small steamer was chartered and filled with mad and excited creditors, armed with rifles and shotguns. It required some time to get steam up and the craft under way, and it was late in the afternoon before the schooner hove in sight with all her sails vainly wooing the breeze which came not, and yet was of such vital importance to the fugitive. But when the steamer was nearly within gunshot and the prey almost grasped, the long deferred airs of evening began to mark the glassy surface with gentle ripples, and the large sails of the yacht slowly filled and swung out her idle booms. Gradually but surely she gathered way, and as the shades of night slowly shut her out from the eager eyes on board the steamer, she was last seen lying over to a swelling breeze, which could not have arrived more timely to save the life of a pious missionary or self-sacrificing saint. Meiggs disappeared from human sight, as many supposed forever, but some years later he became known to all the world as a railroad contractor and proprietor in Peru, and finally as the financial backbone of that free and enlightened Republic. While the native patriots proved their intense and uncontrollable love for the dear people by gaily cutting each other's throats, and in desperate rivalry fought—as is the custom of patriots—to get their hands into the Treasury, this wiser son of the Pilgrim Fathers devoted his talents strictly to financial industry till he became virtually the Treasury himself, and came to own pretty much everything in the Republic, always excepting those inestimable boons of liberty, equality, fraternity, and suffrage, inalienably vested in each intelligent, though bare-legged and somewhat parti-colored, citizen. This Puritan successor of Pizarro, the second conquistador of Peru, after relieving his adopted country, by strictly legal and constitutional methods, of most of its portable property, turned his attention to devising some safe scheme for revisiting his native land. For years he made ineffectual efforts to buy in

his notes and forged collateral, and was said to have invested large sums in an effort to obtain certain California legislation better adapted to his particular necessities than to the public welfare. But that process being carried on at arm's length through agents, was complicated, difficult and expensive, since American statesmen are not to be had for nothing; and death at last found and mastered him before his object was accomplished, so that the 'land of the free' saw his enterprising face no more.

In the year 1855, our offices were on the second floor of a fine structure of Chinese granite, erected and partially occupied by the bankers, Wright & Co., and H. Hentz & Co., on the N. W. corner of Montgomery and Jackson Streets. Few of the present generation of San Franciscans can realize that that was then a choice location, the notion being then generally entertained that in consequence of the deep water front on both sides of Telegraph Hill, the commercial and financial business of the city must gain ground toward the north. Notwithstanding exactly the contrary has since occurred, at that time this was one of the choicest corners in the city, the three other corners being occupied respectively by the bank of Lucas, Turner & Co. in charge of Captain William T. Sherman, who was destined to so much future distinction of another kind; the Metropolitan Theatre, and the great financial and commercial firm of Pioche Bayerque & Co. Beyond the corner, the extensive pile known as Helleck's Building, sheltered half the lawyers of the city, prolonging southward a line of buildings equal or superior to any others then existing in the city. General Sherman's recollections as published by himself, give a flattering account of his able and successful administration of the bank of Lucas, Turner & Co. which was probably not appreciated at the time by his principals, and will scarcely be recalled with equal admiration by old residents of that date. Though several banks of equal reputation were close at hand, I had opened an account there in consequence of its convenient location across the street from our office. Baker and I were then operating with success a quartz mine in Amador County, which being under a competent superintendent, only required my personal presence occasionally. The money for Saturday wages requiring to be

shipped on Thursday, while the remitted bullion only arrived on Wednesday, the certificate being usually detained by the branch mint some time later, a considerable amount for working capital was generally on deposit, while we had never needed or asked for pecuniary accommodation of any kind. After the account had been with them for some months, we being well known to them and the public as quite responsible, independently of the mining enterprise, I thought I might need some extra funds on one occasion, and told Sherman I might have occasion to overdraw about \$5000 that afternoon, handing him at the same time, as collateral, a mint certificate of similar amount, which documents were invariably worth within about five per cent of their face. I had no idea he would have required any collateral at all, and simply handed it over to avoid being asked for it, having no idea that a similar discount at satisfactory rates would have been refused me by any bank or money-lender in town. I was therefore quite surprised when S., scanning the document cautiously, remarked "This certificate is hardly security for the amount." I looked at him for a moment to make sure whether or not he was joking, but observing no sign of facetiousness, began to feel warm myself, and taking back the certificate started for the door, resolved to end all transactions there as soon as our funds could be checked out and deposited elsewhere. As I was going out the door he called after me, "Come back, Wistar; I did not mean to refuse. You can have the money, of course." But having become provoked at his hesitation and overcautiousness, I declined it on any terms, and at once terminated my relations with Sherman and his bank. In the same connection it is not inappropriate to add that the bank—though it could not fail with the millions of Mr. Lucas and Major Turner behind it—closed its business a few months later on account of its large losses and unsatisfactory condition, with numerous assets of much worse character than U. S. mint certificates; one of them being a book account to the amount of \$60,000—for the overdrawn account of a single firm of bankrupt Jew grocers.

This trifling incident merely illustrates a peculiarity of judgment on a delicate—though to a banker by no means unimportant—subject; but when one notes General Sherman's recollections of

his connection with the State authorities in their efforts to suppress the Vigilance Committee mob in 1856, as published by himself some years since in a magazine article, and to a certain extent reiterated in his Memoirs, one is tempted to agree with a certain New England writer on California topics, who has expressed the opinion that the particular kind of memory with which General Sherman was endowed, "was hardly meant by the Creator for purely historical purposes, genial and amusing as its productions may be."¹⁵ Sherman had at that time accepted obligations to his adopted State much exceeding those of a mere private citizen. As Major General of the San Francisco division of militia, he had presumably qualified himself by taking the oath pertaining to that office; and it was the judgment of many who were personally familiar with all the events of that celebrated insurrection, including the extreme difficulties and perplexities of the State authorities, that his indecision, vacillation, and apparent dread of personal unpopularity, by embarrassing and delaying till too late the action of the latter, defeated their purpose altogether.

Without entering here upon the ultimate provocations and causes of the Vigilance Committee, all parties have agreed that its immediate occasion was the shooting of the disreputable editor, King, already referred to. During the week first succeeding that event and while the result of the wound was yet uncertain, popular excitement rose high under the industrious stimulation of many influential persons who must have known the dangerous character of their experiment but were flattered by their new born notoriety and seduced by the noxious hope of political preferment. Such persons contributed both money and organizing ability to the movement, so that when King's death at length occurred, after a week or more of minutely published and dramatic illness, the mob had been already organized and drilled in a number of strong battalions and had possessed themselves of all the suitable arms in the State, except such as were the property of the United States in custody of General Wool, the Federal commander of the Pacific Department in the U. S. Arsenal at Benicia. They had also

¹⁵ American Commonwealths, California, Josiah Royce, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Harvard College, 1888, page 444.

perfected a civil or executive organization by which the ultimate power was lodged in an executive committee of twenty-one, and had fortified or surrounded with sand-bag *epaulements*, a large building in the lower part of Sacramento Street, which served as a secure prison and place of arms.

On the other side, the county officials being mostly of the low grade common with such persons under our elective system, feared either from personal or political motives to take any effective steps in defence of order, and the Sheriff, one Scannell, a low Irish, or half-Irish ruffian from New York, being without personal character or standing, was so badly frightened by the suddenness and power of the demonstration, that he was induced with difficulty to summon the *posse comitatis*, the only possible hope for defending the jail or making any face at all to the mob. That measure met with but little obedience, being responded to only by the judges and lawyers, with a half-dozen rogues and gamblers who must have been astonished at finding themselves for the first time in their lives on the side of order, and whose new-born love of law was perhaps stimulated by a shrewd suspicion of the probable action of the committee toward persons of their own description.

The entire posse, about 100 strong, assembled as directed at the jail where, as their first act, they did me the honor of unanimously electing me their Captain. The county jail stood upon an unexcavated bank of rock on the north side of Broadway above Montgomery, and consisted of two parallel rows of stone cells at right angles to the street with a passage between them, the whole, together with offices and accommodations for the Sheriff's deputies in charge, being enclosed in a large barn-like frame structure. As it was impossible to defend this building successfully by direct musketry fire with the force and means available, I at once began mining the bank which supported it, by drilling vertical holes outside to the level of the street, loading them with gunpowder and leading the separate fuses inside the building, so they could be fired separately and successively as circumstances might require. Loop holes were cut in the wall (of one inch pine boards) over the cells, the arched stone roofs of which served as infantry platforms, on two sides of the building.

The Sheriff, by this time thoroughly cowed, and whose whole study seemed to be how to prevent the posse he had himself summoned, from making a real defence, soon ordered me to cease the preparation of the mines. As it was plain there could be no efficient defense without them, his position disgusted the individuals of the posse, who, though mostly willing and ready to sell their lives if necessary, in defence of the selected stronghold of law and order, were quite unwilling to be brought to ridicule as personal adherents of a cowardly rogue who, as all now believed, was simply posing to cover an intended back-down and surrender. They accordingly left by twos and threes, until on the morning after King's death when the jail was actually invested by an imposing force and about to be summoned, I was the only individual of the posse remaining. The Sheriff having determined—no doubt from the first—to make no real defence, was quick to avail himself of this defection, and directed me also to withdraw, which as a law-abiding man deriving his only authority in the premises from the official himself, I proceeded to do, after requiring a written order to that effect endorsed on the back of my summons. But the jail being then already invested by a large force of infantry and artillery, the high-spirited representative of the law had the impudence to invite me to sneak out by a back exit, which of course I refused to do, and walked out through the large front gate of the place which I insisted should be opened for the purpose.

Broadway itself was then clear, except that a number of guns were already in battery on the opposite sidewalk, the gunners standing by with linstocks lighted, but every adjacent alley and street was occupied by strong infantry columns already in position for assault, when the order should be given and the doors blown in. I was at once arrested by a patrol, and taken to their commander, Doane, who rejoiced in the title of 'Marshal.' I alarmed this doughty individual by telling him with rather strained military license, in reply to his anxious questions, that I had left the jail on business the nature of which I declined to disclose, that it was well held and would be desperately defended by the Sheriff with regular and special deputies. As I was well known, I was then dismissed and conducted through the lines, proceeding to take

up a position on Telegraph Hill, from which I could look down into the streets full of troops, and see the entire panorama unroll itself beneath.

Everything being prepared, the jailer was almost immediately summoned, and surrendered ignominiously without a shot, the prisoners who were wanted being forthwith removed to the Committee's stronghold at the other end of the town. Outraged as were the friends of order by this successful issue of the revolt, it was supposed the worst was over when Casey and Cora were hung the next morning, and that affairs would gradually become quieted and resume their usual course. Such I had reason to believe was the prevalent expectation with the mob themselves, but their leaders liked the taste of power and began now to play the game for political rewards. The organization was kept up, their strong places retained, arrests and sentences proceeded, obnoxious persons were put to death, banished or immured, the writ of *Habeas corpus* was defied, and there seemed a strong probability that the political anarchy reigning unchecked in the City would extend throughout the State. After the dispersion of the posse and capture of the jail, I had become a subaltern in a volunteer company authorized by the Governor, and then being raised by Calhoun Benham, a distinguished lawyer and former officer in the Mexican war. While thus engaged I received a message from the Governor—William Neely Johnson, of Kentucky—desiring me to call on him in Sacramento at the earliest practicable moment, and took the steamer the same evening, reaching the Governor's office the next morning. He stated that excitement and passion were extending through the State, and he deemed the time had come to exert all the force at his disposal to suppress it at the fountain head in San Francisco. That the entire militia force of that city having actually or practically gone over to the enemy with their arms, he considered it imprudent to call out the weak semblance of such organizations from the country, and had no reliable force in view except one company which might be made up in each of the towns of Sacramento and Stockton, and whatever force we might be able to raise in the very presence of the mob at San Francisco. The latter I placed at two full companies at the outside, making

the entire available force about 400 men, all first class fighting men, but almost entirely without any weapons but their private small arms.

He stated that negotiations were in progress with the U. S. army and navy authorities who were indisposed to meddle with the difficulty without orders from Washington, which could not be obtained under sixty days, but that he hoped to get arms from Gen. Wool, and sufficient coöperation from the sloop-of-war *John Adams*, Boutwell, commander, then lying in the harbor, to destroy or at least hold in check the Committee's fort at the foot of Sacramento Street. Capt. Sherman although he had recently received and accepted the appointment of Major General of militia of the second, or San Francisco Division, was indisposed to commit himself by positive action in the raising of troops where his name, example and influence could be so useful, and seemed inclined to wait till a sufficient force could be actually raised, armed and put in his hands ready for service. The Governor considered the thing of most immediate importance was to give confidence both to Sherman and the men it was hoped to enlist, by getting actual possession of the arms promised by Gen. Wool. For this purpose he commissioned me his A. D. C. and dismissed me with the following orders:

To return immediately to San Francisco, obtain a small sloop, man her with a few picked men, and conduct her quietly to Wool's headquarters at Benicia, and obtaining there the arms Wool had promised to deliver on the requisitions furnished me, to carry them to the State Penitentiary at San Quentin, whose employees remained faithful, and whence they could be distributed as occasion should permit, or where such men as should be enlisted, might be collected for organization and instruction. The plan was as good a one as the adverse facts permitted, and might have succeeded had Capt. Sherman been at Benicia as the Governor had arranged and expected, to back my demand, and preserve the stiffening in Gen. Wool's fast weakening backbone. I obtained a suitable sloop, with a well-selected and reliable crew of ten men, of whom three were detailed for navigation, while the others were reserved for general purposes. Among the last was John C.

Heenan, a fighting blacksmith, the fame of whose subsequent pugilistic struggle with Tom Sayers, as the 'Benicia boy,' afterwards filled the English-speaking world.

Placing the sloop at anchor near the wharf at Benicia, with spring, or shore lines at head and stern, I repaired alone to Wool's office, which I think was in the hotel, where instead of Sherman, weak and irresolute, but friendly, I found active enemies in the persons of Bailie Peyton, and ex-Governor Henry S. Foote, two politicians who belonged to neither side, but being both 'Know Nothing' candidates for U. S. Senator, were desirous of suppressing all side issues, especially the pending one, and ending an excitement which in no case was likely to bring any good to the old school of politicians. But alike all selfish temporizers, their scheme for ending it was by submitting the State and its officers in all essentials to the Committee, with the hope that as a reward for such good behavior by the lawful State authorities, the mob would then be pleased to abdicate, leaving to the intriguants, individually, the real credit of the adjustment, and the dignified position of impartial arbiters friendly to all sides, and elevated above the passions of both. Their present business was therefore to prevent a collision by inducing Wool to withhold the arms he had promised. I succeeded in obtaining a private interview with the General and handed him the Governor's two requisitions, No. 1 for some 120 stand of muskets which were the admitted property of the State, known as her 'quota' of some former distribution by the Federal Government, and No. 2, calling for the loan of 300 additional stand 'to suppress an existing armed insurrection.' In spite of my request for privacy, Wool could not make up his mind without consulting his mentors, who of course warmly opposed the grant. After much discussion the matter finally took the shape of an open argument before him, between myself, without the promised Sherman to back me, and the two politicians; in which the above theory of motives was alluded to, and considerable warm language occurred all round. Wool was a long time for refusing altogether, but finally, under determined pressure, agreed to grant No. 1, and refuse No. 2. A hostile crowd was already collecting in the streets (Peyton and Foote having made the matter public) and I demanded

that the boxes should be placed in the large warehouse at the end of the wharf subject to my order, which was done.

When assured they were actually in the warehouse, I walked out on the wharf, making my way through the crowd without actual molestation, and ordered the sloop hauled in alongside. Then out sprang my seven general utility men prepared for war, great or small, without counting numbers. The wharf was a long structure (several hundred, perhaps a thousand, feet long) with an offset at the end, the whole standing over the water on piles, the warehouse, a very large frame building of one story, being located in the angle facing the offset. The crowd being without plan or leaders, was soon pushed back to, and held upon the main wharf, when I presented my order to the warehouseman and demanded the boxes, which were refused by the person in charge, who had locked up the warehouse with his employees inside. As the crowd was rapidly increasing and fast approaching the fighting point, I backed the functionary against the door, and producing my watch, gave him two minutes for compliance, promising at the end of that grace to set fire to the warehouse, open fire on the mob, and remove the arms in the confusion, making sure of him as the first victim whatever the issue. The *argumentum ad hominem* prevailed, the doors were opened, and his own employees compelled to truck the boxes to the sloop where they were quickly secured by the crew, the other men being ordered to fall slowly back with face to the foe. When I jumped aboard, the last man, the jib was already hoisted and the vessel several feet from the wharf.

The wharf was by this time crowded to the edge, but as the little craft paid off, and her crew bent on to the main halyard, I informed the mob that if a single shot was fired, I would let go the anchor, and from that inaccessible position sweep the wharf as long as a man remained on it. The language received in reply was not complimentary, the mob no doubt feeling like the boy at school, who, when well whipped by his comrade, remarked that if he could not lick him he could, at all events, 'make mouths at his sister;' but we had secured what we came for, and after getting myself landed at a point below from which I could catch the steamer, the sloop proceeded on her way to San Quentin. It was

not till the following morning that I learned in San Francisco, that the Committee, doubtless kept well informed by Peyton and Foote, had sent four well-manned steamers to cruise for the little craft, by one of which she was overhauled and captured during the night with all her crew and cargo.

Thus ended the only earnest attempt by the State authorities to suppress the San Francisco mob by force of arms. On account of the great disparity of numbers concerned, the total want of arms, the sympathy for the mob extensively prevalent all over the State, and the weakness displayed by prominent men in the Federal, State and City service, its chance of success was always desperate, but might have succeeded if all the men in office had displayed fidelity and vigor equal to that exerted by many persons upon whom the State possessed no more claim than on any simple citizen. Even Sherman, though free in his criticism and ridicule of many prominent persons anxious for action, admits the deception and perfidy of Wool; but it was the opinion of many that his strictures upon the Governor, the Chief Justice and other officials and private persons who were ready to risk all in the cause of order, offer a very indifferent explanation of the supineness, inaction, and excessive caution of the Major General of State Militia in the menaced Division.

The Vigilance Committee continued to be run as a political machine, rapidly degenerating into a scramble of the noisiest and greediest for public office; but its subsequent career belongs rather to the history of the State than to these personal recollections. My professional partnership was soon after dissolved, Baker acquiring a residence in Oregon prior to his canvass of that newly-admitted State for the U. S. Senate, while I removed to another office in Halleck's Building, and continued to practice, in connection, though not in partnership, with Judge R. A. Thompson and Henry P. Irving, both formerly of Virginia. Though many of my clients were officials of, or active sympathizers with the Committee, I do not know that I was materially injured in business by my active participation with the losing side, and at all events, have never regretted my course. Few will deny that, whether ever justifiable or not, it is an extremely serious thing for any

organized community to throw over the orderly methods slowly and painfully developed through a thousand years of civilization, in the effort to rectify by violence the inefficiency or corruption of officials of its own choice, who can in our country always be changed with but little delay by safe and legal methods devised expressly for the purpose; and I know of nothing in the history or achievements of the celebrated San Francisco mob of 1856 to weaken the force of this reflection, or make me regret, in any respect, the course I deemed it right to take.

It is a trite saying that adversity is easier borne by many than prosperity, and it is certain that in my case the desire to visit again the friends and scenes of early life, which had not particularly oppressed me during the first years of absence, grew strong with returning prosperity, and in the comfortable circumstances in which I found myself in 1857 could no longer be resisted. I now possessed a personal clientage including several foreign bankers and merchants which insured a large and growing practice, and had not only paid off my debts incurred in the cause of agriculture, but already derived a substantial income from investments successfully made. The voice of prudence therefore whispered the homely maxim to 'let well enough alone,' yet those who have been tried in the same way will readily understand the strength and persistency of the wish to spend at least one holiday season at home, before definitely abandoning it forever. Yielding at length to that irresistible longing, as well as the urgency of friends at home, I began early in 1857 to set my house in order for a six months' absence. My valued and faithful friends, H. P. Irving and B. T. Pate, both from Virginia, agreed to keep my practice together as well as practicable, and were duly made acquainted with my clients, while another friend, A. C. Whitcomb, of New Hampshire, an able and successful lawyer, eminent as well for practical business qualities, undertook charge of my property, converted as far as possible into short-term mortgages or short interest-bearing bills with collateral.

I purchased a ticket by the steamer to sail on September 1st, but being unexpectedly detained, sold it at a small loss, and took another for the 5th, a disappointment which though impatiently

anathematized at the time, undoubtedly saved my life, as the steamer of the 1st connected at the Isthmus with the ill-fated *Central America*, for New York, which foundered suddenly in the Atlantic off Hatteras, and sunk with a million and a half of treasure, and over six hundred passengers. Of some seven hundred of the crew and passengers only twenty or thirty individuals, after clinging to doors, skylights, chairs and hatchcovers all night, were picked up by a Norwegian bark next day and carried safely into some southern port.

There existed in San Francisco at that time an evil practice of blackmailing departing passengers in the following rascally manner: An action would be brought and process served late in the evening before steamer day, followed by arrest on the steamer just before sailing next morning, on a judge's order based on affidavits of the defendant's approaching departure from the jurisdiction. No matter how baseless the claim, anything was enough to support the initial proceeding and hold the defendant till the steamer had sailed, unless he proved squeezable. The plaintiff of course was always irresponsible for any damages that might subsequently be recovered, and most persons of substance who had spent many months in preparing for an absence calculated to terminate at a certain time, would rather pay cash for any reasonable compromise than break up all their plans, and sacrifice the long-expected visit home. This was the game tried on me. Late on the evening of the 4th, I was duly served with a writ of the 12th District Court, at suit of a former clerk of the Superior Court, claiming a considerable amount for old court fees charged against my former partner before I was connected with him or had even been admitted to practice. Of course I knew there would be an order of arrest to be executed on the steamer just before sailing, when I would be surrounded by friends taking leave, and I was sitting in the office considering whether I should abandon my project and lose another ticket, or make the best terms I could get, when Judge Norton of the 12th District Court called to take his leave and wish me a pleasant voyage. Norton was a man of conceded ability and spotless character. Though an elderly bachelor with many of the peculiarities popularly attributed to that excellent class of men, he was

clear-headed, vigorous and fearless, and knew me well, having served with me in the posse summoned in 1856 to defend the jail. His manner both on and off the bench was full of dignity, his professional attainments commanded the highest respect of both bar and public, and I would no more have entertained the idea of myself inviting his attention to the scrape I was in by virtue of a writ from his own court, than I would have ventured to propose setting fire to the Court House. His speech in conversation was as peculiar as his manner, consisting of slowly ejaculated sentences with all superfluous words omitted, usually leaving the beginning and end of his crisp sentences to be supplied by the interlocutor.

At the time of his visit I was alone, and his first act after a mutual greeting, was to seat himself in the most remote chair in the room, and conceal the real and kindly interest which had prompted the visit by the cold and indifferent manner which no one believed in, but which it was his custom to assume. The first part of the conversation was something like this: "Going away tomorrow, eh?" "Yes, Judge, I have got all ready to go and fully expected it, till within a few minutes." "H—m, what's the matter?" "Well, that rascal McM. has been using your court to play the usual game on me." "Game, eh, what sort of game?" "Well he has sued me as Baker's partner for some old claims against Baker before I was connected with him, and I suppose of course he will get an order of arrest and blackmail me on the steamer, tomorrow." "H—m, in my court eh?" "Yes." "H—m, order of arrest, eh? Order of arrest—very serious thing. Must be based on sufficient affidavits. Must be full enough to justify such extreme rigor. Such affidavits if sufficient should take a long time to read and consider. H—m, what time does steamer sail?" "At 9 A.M." "H—m, I get up at 8, and am a slow reader—never act hastily. If my opinion is worth anything, I think you will get off."

What happened at his Honor's chambers next morning I do not know, but I heard no more of the claim. I wrote to Whitcomb to defend the suit for me, but it was never pressed after the blackmailing scheme failed, and was ultimately struck from the docket on motion of my attorney. Before proceeding on my

voyage I cannot help relating an Irishman's expedient for disposing of the same difficulty. Prior to Norton's visit, my friend Reilly, a rollicking and joyous young Irishman who was a deputy clerk in Norton's Court and a great admirer and friend of mine, had called on the same melancholy errand of bidding goodbye. To him I had imparted my difficulty without reserve, and of course received his warmest sympathy. He studied over it a moment and shouted—"No he won't arrest you; bejavers I'll go right off now and stale the sale of the Coort, and carry it in me pocket till the stamer's gone and you wid it." "Thank you kindly R., for your good intentions, but unfortunately the order of arrest is a judge's order, and does not require the seal." That non-plussed poor R. whose remedies were now exhausted, but who would have needed little encouragement to 'stale' the judge himself, if required to make good his ideas of friendship to those he loved.

As I write these last words of San Francisco, memory seems to renew with life and feeling the painful wrench with which I severed myself from it so many years ago, and which would have been little short of agonizing, had I then known I was to see it and its warm hearts no more. I am thankful to Heaven that throughout life I have at every place and period found friends to admire and to love; but alas, one must admit how rare and hard it is to replace those first early friendships of hot and enthusiastic youth, far away among different scenes and in later life. Memory still goes back to them as the first and best, and persists in according to them all ideal, as well as actual qualities. Many a face I have not beheld for forty years and can never see again, comes back to my recollection as it dwells on those days of long ago. Feasts and frays, friendship and duels, professional struggles and political broils, with every kind of incident peculiar to that delightful life where we slept in our offices, devoting our days to work, and our evenings to study and discussion—rise to mind even at this remote day when, in the nature of things, there can remain such a limited number of survivors. There were then few families in the place, and little of that element of social life that in normal communities constitutes so large a part of our daily interests and affections. Our one daily social event was an elaborate dinner at a

certain French restaurant where a few of us always met at six in the evening, rarely separating before eight. In what then existed of domestic as well as men's society there was a decided southern preponderance, and nearly all my intimates were young lawyers from Virginia and other southern States, most of whom in due time came home at the summons of war, and almost to a man met a soldier's fate in the Confederate Army. Nearly every great battle of the war claimed some of them. Many rose to positions of military responsibility and distinction before finding their fatal day, and as far as I have been able to learn, none were parsimonious of their blood, or ever failed in a soldier's duty.

There's many a lad I knew that's dead
And many a lass grown old,
And as the lesson strikes my head
My weary heart grows cold.

It was early on Sept. 5th, 1857, that I took what turned out to be my last look at San Francisco, as I rattled down Broadway in a cab and stepped on board the steamer, which, unless memory deceives me, was the old *California*, the first put on the line. Every berth was occupied, and the lively party that had assembled to see us off crowded the vessel and all neighboring standing ground. But the decks were at last cleared, the lines let go, and the steamer after slowly traversing the city front, doubled the noble promontory of Telegraph Hill, and pointing her head past Fort Point to the open sea, fairly started on her long voyage of 3500 miles to Panama. Senators, M. Cs., and other dignitaries were plenty on board, and certainly a livelier or more cheerful party was never assembled than that rollicking crowd, mostly young, generally successful, and all stirred with joyous excitement at the prospect of soon seeing the homes from which most of us had been separated for years. We carried a brilliant full moon down the Mexican and Central American coasts, keeping in full view of the land, its bold shores and volcanic peaks, touched briefly at Acapulco, and reached Panama in nineteen days. We landed this time at the new town some distance below the scene of my former adventures, and found the railroad now in operation 47 miles, to Chagres. Debarking, railroading and re-embarking,

occupied another day, and ten days more, including a touch at old Providence and another at Havana, brought us into New York harbor at 4 A.M., October 5th, which unfortunately for my impatience, was Sunday when no cars then ran. Having lost my only hat at sea, my astonishment was great when I learned that unlike the customs of San Francisco, every New York shop was closed, and it was with great difficulty and the special guardianship of a hotel waiter, that I was at last able to penetrate a hatter's shop by a back way. At that time while there were some church-goers in San Francisco who gave themselves a holiday on Sunday, most of us knew little or nothing of them and their ways, and steady unchanging work was the habit of most, nearly everyone being found at all times in their respective places of business. I fancy a mutual influence has been exerted since then, and both cities have moved toward a certain uniformity on a middle ground.

Of course before we were fairly in the harbor we were shocked by hearing from the pilot the loss of the *Central America*, whose San Francisco cabin passengers must be well known to us though their names were not yet published. As it was then impossible to get off for Philadelphia till some time after the magic hour of twelve on Sunday night, I bethought myself of the residence on Staten Island of my mother's oldest brother, Samuel T. Jones, a merchant of New York, and set out to find him. Walking up a long hill on the Island I noticed two elderly gentlemen conversing outside the door of a small church which they were apparently about to enter, and took the opportunity to inquire further respecting my route. One of them asked if the California steamer was in, to which of course I replied in the affirmative. "Oh no," said the other, "I think there must be a mistake; I have been watching the narrows all the morning from my house and have seen no signs of her." "That," said I, "is perhaps because you did not get up early enough. She came in at 4 this morning, to my certain knowledge, for I was on board of her." "Heavens!" said number one, "You were on board? Do you know my son, Samuel Ward, of San Francisco?" "Very well." "Was he on board?" "No, sir." "Ah," said he tossing up his arms, "it is then as I feared; he was on the *Central America*!" "No he was not, for I distinctly recollect

seeing him in San Francisco after her passengers sailed on September 1st." Thus I was enabled at a chance roadside rencontre to carry consolation to a father's heart, pending the weeks which must elapse before he could obtain more direct information.

It is hardly necessary to state that I arrived in Philadelphia by the earliest Monday train and found my father's family still living at 'Hilton,' their country seat, from which it was not the custom to remove into town till about the middle of November. Sisters grown up and married since my absence, and other relatives congregated there made it a gay autumn for one who had seen nothing of domestic life for so many years. My eyes so long accustomed to the bare yellow hills of California, or the pine clad ridges of its Sierras capped with white, revelled in the lovely undulating hills and valleys of the Colonial States, robed in the gorgeous coloring of the declining year. The green fields, the comfortable and finished homes, the domestic-looking farm houses, the abundance of the fairer sex, the enclosed pastures and well-made roads, the comparatively old and substantial appearance of everything—all these things recalled early memories till now forgotten or obscured, and, backed by the solicitations of all I met, began to shake the allegiance to my adopted land. I had brought with me from California two of the great land cases arising from the yet unsettled Mexican grants, which had been entrusted to me for argument in the Supreme Court of the United States, and naturally sought acquaintance with the professional men of my native city. These, on the whole, encouraged me to think that a legal practice might be slowly obtained, while on the other hand expenses seemed almost trifling, measured by California standards. I could get offices for less annual rent than I paid per month in San Francisco. Books, clothes, board, amusements, everything was at least one-half. Gradually shaken, but not yet fully persuaded, I hired desk room from a lawyer in good practice who possessed a fine library, put up my shingle, and went to work preparing my cases. After a few months I possessed half a dozen local cases of my own, of no great magnitude, to be sure, but full of encouragement, and in short, found myself earning a living before I expected it. Another circumstance influencing me toward a new

settlement at home arose from the condition of the commercial panic prevailing on my arrival, and the advantage I was able to draw from it. Gold having mounted to a premium of about twenty per cent, I instructed my San Francisco agent to realize as rapidly as possible and ship the proceeds in gold coin by steamer, with insurance. In anticipation of its arrival I sold for gold in California, exchange on New York, payable of course in funds bankable at the place of payment, and as the gold premium disappeared, purchased at somewhere between seventy and eighty per cent, the California State 7 per cent bonds of which the \$4,000,000 issued and pronounced illegal, null and void by the Supreme Court, had just been validated by a statute submitted to and ratified by the popular vote. As the facts became known and the credit of the State restored, I resold these bonds in New York at par, and thus in one way and another had transferred to the east a considerable part of my modest and materially augmented effects.

I finally took an office of my own in 1858 at No. 233 South 5th Street, a locality then much affected by lawyers, but long since given up to other purposes. I received two other California land cases from lawyers of my acquaintance who could not themselves conveniently travel sixty days to watch and argue them at Washington, and was also much employed by California lawyers in hunting up and examining testimony from long-lost Alcaldes and other witnesses in similar cases, now residing at various places in the Atlantic States. I was admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania on January 4, 1858, and took the opportunity of attending the lectures of the Law Department of the University, then delivered by Professors Sharswood, McCall and Miller. What is called in fashionable jargon, 'society,' of course possessed lively attractions for one who knew as little of it as I did, and as I was fortunate in finding relations and friends who kindly communicated as much of their higher social civilization as I was able to absorb, began to hope that I might not have passed entirely beyond the age of improvement.

With all the new distractions and amusements to which I had hitherto been a stranger, I cannot say I worked very hard, but then I found myself in a country where no one worked very hard,

according to California standards. I met some California friends by arrangement at the Virginia Springs, where I spent most of the summer of 1858, and worked at the law the following winter, but toward spring when the entire country became excited over the discoveries of gold at Pike's Peak in the present state of Colorado, it is hardly to be wondered at that I was not one of the last to become infected with the prevailing spirit of enterprise and adventure.

END OF VOLUME I



